

WISCONSIN LEARNFARE PROGRAM

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL SECURITY AND FAMILY POLICY
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED FIRST CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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JUNE 18, 1990
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WISCONSIN LEARNFARE PROGRAM

MONDAY, JUNE 18, 1990

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND FAMILY POLICY,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m., in room SD-215, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Also present: Senator Kohl.

[The press release announcing the hearing follows:]

[Press Release No. H-38, June 12, 1990]

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON LEARNFARE; WISCONSIN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TO BE FOCUS

WASHINGTON, DC—Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Chairman, said Tuesday the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy will hold a hearing this month on the Wisconsin Learnfare Program.

The hearing will be on *Monday, June 18, 1990 at 10 a.m.* in Room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

"In the Family Support Act of 1988, we changed the Aid to Families With Dependent Children Program from merely an income maintenance program to primarily a jobs program. Our message was clear: parents—both parents—must provide for their children. Fathers must pay child support and mothers must be provided job training. We modeled the Act after innovative experiments in several states," said Moynihan (D., New York).

"At this hearing we will explore a very different type of experiment: the Wisconsin Learnfare Program. Learnfare is based on a wholly different premise, namely, that just as parents have the responsibility to support their children, so, too, welfare parents have the responsibility to assure that their children attend school. It is an idea not without controversy, but worthy of inquiry, and I look forward to learning more about the program," Moynihan said.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW YORK, CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

Senator MOYNIHAN. A very good morning to our witnesses and guests, and to our distinguished colleague and friend, Senator Kohl, who in the first instance requested this hearing and is going to join us this morning.

May I say how refreshing it is to see a large audience and group of witnesses and concerned citizenry on a subject having to do with child welfare. This is not necessarily our normal experience in the Finance Committee. When things like this come up we are lucky to have a Corporal's guard on a Monday morning. For those of you who do not know, on the other side of that wall is the famous "Gucci Gulch." You should see us when we have an oil and gas

bill, it is filled out there. But when children are involved you can usually shoot deer in the hallways. So we very much welcome you here.

I have just a few brief remarks which I would like to make before asking Senator Kohl to speak. I would like to say that this is an overview hearing, of course. But we meet for a purpose which has become increasingly common in recent years which is for the Finance Committee, which is responsible for Social Security matters and Social Security which includes Aid to Families With Dependent Children, and Medicaid, which is to say what we call welfare, we find ourselves meeting to discuss an innovation that began at the State levels. That old theory of Federalism works. It probably works in cycles.

In the late 1970's, early 1980's, when it became quite clear nothing much was happening in Washington and nothing was going to come out of Washington, Governors began to innovate and start programs. And, indeed, the Family Support Act which passed in 1988 and which was the first major change in the welfare system since it began in 1935, was very much the initiative of the States. We called it the Governors' bill and made that point.

What we tried to do in that bill is establish a social contract. What had been called welfare began in 1935 in the Social Security Act as a temporary widow's pension, meant to tie us over until survivor's insurance became normally available under Social Security. And the typical recipient was described as a West Virginia miner's widow. The subject of family support did not come up. The man was dead. The subject of employment did not come up. Women did not work in coal mines. It was just that—a permanent condition that would stay that way.

Now a half century goes by and that does not describe the population on welfare at all. The majority of children have male parents who are simply absent. Female parents who are not in the work force when most female parents are in the work force. That is what distinguishes this group. They are not in the work force. And they do not get child support.

So we have said that under the Family Support Act that there's a mutual obligation. Society has to help people get themselves back on their feet and they have to help do so. Welfare is a transitional matter and we know that for about half the population it is. These are typically more mature people, who have family, marriage problems and welfare is a transition, like unemployment insurance. They get themselves back together and they go off on their own and don't need much help or advice from anybody.

There's the other half, however, that is very deeply in trouble. They get into welfare very early. They have very few skills of handling themselves in a larger society and sort of drop out. This is not a small program.

Now we are going to hear from our very able Assistant Secretary for Family Support, Ms. Barnhart. She is going to start tracking this for us. She has agreed to try to get a series going, to project how many children will receive welfare before reaching age 18. But we make a reasonable estimate, defensible certainly, that almost one-third of American children will be on welfare before age 18—

one in three. This is not a rare event, save in certain inner cities, I think more of that to the contrary.

I estimate that in my city of New York, about half the children born in 1980 will be on welfare. Cities like Washington, two-thirds. It is the normal experience. It is surprising that it can happen that anybody is on welfare in Wisconsin, because Wisconsin is a place where nothing ever goes wrong or rather, everything works so well. But if you have this condition in Wisconsin, you may know that it is something that is across the national range.

We have been surprised and interested in the innovation in Wisconsin in the effort to change school outcomes, which is very normal. And we have known for a very long time now, we have known for a quarter century, that school outcomes are not easily explained and certainly not easily changed.

I recall in 1963, in the summer, when President Kennedy's legislative program was sort of dead in the water, one morning when I was Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Research and Assistant Secretary of Labor, I just noticed a little item in the Washington Post that big that said that General Hershey, the head of the Selective Service Administration, had once again submitted his annual report. The fiscal year then began July 1. And once again, half the persons called up for the draft were either rejected because they failed the mental test or the physical test or both. And that seemed to be an interesting way to say a large number, a high number.

We proposed to the White House that we look into this and see if you corrected or get a good sample, what would then be the national experience. We prepared a report. President Kennedy was very much interested in that. We had it ready on January and it was given to President Johnson. It was the only data we had for the war on poverty; and it was called "One Third of a Nation." We found that if you had a full sample, a third of the young men turning 18 would fail the Armed Forces mental test, physical test or both.

There were enormous ranges. That is the big thing we found out. The same test was given everywhere, and as regards to education it was "The One" same test. The same testers—the U.S. Army. But whereas in some States the failure rates on the mental test got up to 35 to 36 percent, in some States it barely existed. I say to you that your neighbor to the West, Minnesota, had the lowest rate—2.0 percent. I think Wisconsin had a bit higher. But, I mean a test with failure rates lower than that you do not have a mental test, you have something else. Whereas, other places would have 10 times that.

So obviously, you know, you can have different people—people behave differently, function differently, you get different outcomes.

In my State of New York we had a rate of failure twice that of neighboring Rhode Island. There is a line in Long Island Sound between New York and Rhode Island. Something is done better in Rhode Island. New York State, actually, for all its expectations of doing better, trying harder, New York State ranked 46th in the States in failure rate, mental test, Armed Forces Qualification Test.

A quarter of a century goes by and you look up the graduation rate—drop out rate. And guess what? New York State is 46th. A quarter of a century, nothing has changed. All the innovation and so forth. And we learned something in this process.

In the Civil Rights Act of 1964 there was a section saying that a study would be made of the unequal opportunities in this country and this was given to James S. Coleman, then at Johns Hopkins. And he, and Campbell, and others then produced the second largest social science research project in history, called "Equality of Educational Opportunity." It had one great feature which is like one of those scientific revolutions that Thomas Kuhn talks of, that when you change your way of thinking, and you stop thinking of the earth as the center of the universe and start thinking of the sun as the center of the solar system—you know things come out differently if you do that.

Coleman shifted our attention from inputs, which is how we always measured education. How much money do you spend per pupil? What is the pupil/teacher ratio? How many books do you have in the library? Our attention has been shifted to outputs—what do children learn?

He found the relations between outputs and schools as such very weak. He found that family, more than anything else, predicted achievement, and that the variations in achievement were more to be found inside schools than between schools. And we have been struggling with that information ever since and trying to learn what to do, how we might improve things.

I will leave it to our witnesses to tell us what they think has changed in Wisconsin. I have already talked much longer than I have done. But to say that I am delighted to see these two subjects come together—welfare and education—because this is what we are talking about. We are talking about the achievement of children and the performance of adults.

With that, I would like to welcome you, sir; and turn it over to Senator Kohl of Wisconsin.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HERBERT H. KOHL, A U.S.
SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator KOHL. Thank you very much, Senator Moynihan.

Mr. Chairman, your knowledge and your commitment to true welfare reform is really unparalleled in our body. The attention you have given to welfare reform in general and Learnfare in particular is critical to our understanding of what does and doesn't work when we try to break the cycle of poverty.

I, myself, am not here to support or oppose Learnfare in terms of all of its political dynamics. We are all here, I hope, because the Learnfare Program as applied to 13 to 19-year-olds in Wisconsin has received an extension from the Federal Government and it is therefore going to move forward in one form or another.

Our goal is to see to it that as it moves forward it is as affective as it can be in achieving its goals and that it is humane. We need to assure that it is more than punitive, which in my opinion is insufficient in reducing welfare dependency and poverty. It is incumbent on all of us to give Learnfare its maximum chance to succeed.

It is incumbent on all of us to address not only the symptoms but the root causes of poverty.

The worst thing for the State of Wisconsin and our Nation is for us to get mired down into politics instead of the human issues. For this hearing is not about politics. It is about people's lives and what we plan to do to make them better. The stated goal of Learnfare is to keep kids in school and there is no partisan debate about that. Everyone agrees with that goal; everyone is for kids in school.

The issues are: How do we do it? And is that enough? The debate to date has largely focused on the question of whether only sanctions or only case management and services or a combination of both can best do the job. People who spend their lives trying to help kids and dysfunctional families say that the threat of losing AFDC benefits is not enough. They say that we need to address the underlying causes of truancy in one generation before we can turn the corner toward reducing the welfare rolls in the next generation. I agree with that.

Unfortunately, the Learnfare Program as it was initially implemented contained little in the way of assistance to the families who were sanctioned. No alcohol and drug or child abuse treatment, no family counseling or mental health services, no real help. In Milwaukee County there are roughly 1,600 sanctioned families every month; yet, there are only three full-time case managers each trying to handle over 500 cases a piece, to help those sanctioned families identify and receive the services they need.

Everyone is entitled to bicker over the numbers, and have been, but the fact is it is not enough. Recent figures tell us that only 28 percent of sanctioned kids in Milwaukee County were back in school in 2 months. We have no real way of measuring how successful that really is, just as we have little way of knowing how many of those kids were in dysfunctional families, not getting needed services for substance and child abuse and family or mental health counseling.

But I believe one thing is clear, some of those kids would have been back in school without the sanctions; and many of the ones who were not in school have complex needs that punishment alone cannot fill.

To break the cycle the poverty we have to do better than that. I think with the State's redesign of Learnfare for the expanded program they also have acknowledged a need for change. And if Pat Goodrich would be so kind as to confirm that, then I think credit ought to be given where it is deserved.

However, based on the flaws in the existing program when the State sought permission to extend it, I was deeply troubled. I visited with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Sullivan, in March to express my concerns. I told him then that I could only support an extension of Learnfare if it were accompanied by a stronger evaluation component, only if it required solid case management, and only if services for dysfunctional families were mandated and available.

I believe those concerns were shared by Dr. Sullivan. They are reflected in the new terms and conditions of the agreement. Dr. Sullivan, through Jo Anne Barnhart and the staff of the Family Support Administration, have added requirements which make the

Learnfare extension approved by Washington fundamentally different from the Learnfare extension requested by Madison.

People of differing views can spin whatever they want out of this agreement, but the fact remains that the Department of Health and Human Services has set new conditions on the way the State of Wisconsin administers Learnfare for the 13 to 19-year-old truants. And in this Senator's mind, those conditions offer new hope to kids and families in trouble. We have an obligation to maximize their chances for success.

As the distinguished chairman knows, the social contract goes two ways. From a policy perspective, I believe we have a right to expect certain things from welfare families. We also, I believe, have a responsibility to make sure that what we ask of them is realistic, and sometimes that means treating the family before sanctioning it.

I do not believe that Learnfare has been or will be either an unmitigated disaster or an unmitigated success. But I know it can be better than it has been if we develop a partnership between the State, the counties, the social service community and the public schools. If this revamped Learnfare Program includes solid case management, backed up by needed services, it could be a constructive program that helps 13 to 19-year-olds currently being sanctioned to stay in school; and it could help their families to function.

The recent actions taken by the Federal Government to require more case management and to assure access to services are commendable. But if confined to pieces of paper exchanged between Washington and Madison, they offer little hope to the thousands of Wisconsin families trapped on the poverty treadmill.

I hope this hearing will shed some light on the conditions set by the Family Support Administration, as well as the depth of commitment of the State and the counties to improving the Learnfare Program. Can we agree that there are often underlying causes of truancy? Can we agree to commit more than lip service to alternative education, case management, and other services that are known to make a difference in people's lives? And if we are going to require case management in services prior to sanctioning for children between the ages of 6 and 12, then should we also have the same requirements in place for the existing program for teenagers?

These are the questions we need to answer if we are serious about our goals. This hearing will, I hope, move us further along in meeting the challenge. So again, I want to thank the distinguished chairman; and I look forward to the testimony of the many fine witnesses here today from Wisconsin.

I am particularly pleased that Pat Goodrich, Secretary of the State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services is with us. Under her leadership negotiations between the State and the Federal Government have produced real improvements in the Learnfare Program; and I am hopeful that we all can work together to make it even better.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Thank you, sir. Just one bit of numbers before we get to our distinguished witnesses. This requires some thought. We have the tables of the ranking for the failure rates in

the Armed Forces qualification test in 1962 and the graduation rates a quarter century later and they correlate very well. The Army finds that if you have not graduated from high school you cannot make it in the Army. It does not work.

Well, you know, in 1962 Minnesota had the lowest failure rate—2.7 percent—in the nation. Twenty-five years later it had the highest graduation rate. Just as we were 46 and 46, you, sir, were very low in the mental test failure rates; and in the graduation rate you are seventh.

What is it about the weather out there? You not only have the best graduation rates in the country—they are in descending order, Minnesota, Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Montana, and Wisconsin. There's something about that Canadian air. I mean there must be. There is no other way I can explain it.

I would like to make one last point, and that is so our witnesses will know, and so our guests will know. We are talking here about a welfare population which is overwhelmingly white. We are not talking about some groups that might seem isolated either physically or otherwise. We are talking about the normal families in abnormal conditions. It is true everywhere. But let us just make it clear that welfare is not just a minority problem. It is a problem for minorities; it is a problem for Americans.

With that, let's ask our two very able witnesses—Jo Anne Barnhart, Madam Secretary will you come forward, the Assistant Secretary for Family Support. We would like to hear you first, Madam Secretary, because you have other responsibilities that will have you have to leave. But I was very interested in what Senator Kohl had to say and we look forward to what you have to say.

STATEMENT OF JO ANNE B. BARNHART, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FAMILY SUPPORT, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. BARNHART. Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Senator Kohl. I am real happy to be here today and have the opportunity to talk with you about the Learnfare Program in Wisconsin.

The Learnfare demonstration was implemented under our demonstration authority, which allows States to test and evaluate important issues through waivers granted by the Department. And as a result of findings from such demonstrations, we are able to gain valuable information that assists us and you, I hope, in improving the welfare system.

To understand where we are today with Learnfare, it is important to go back and review the history of this project. In 1987, the Department of Health and Human Services approved a major welfare reform initiative enacted by Governor Thompson and the Wisconsin State Legislature. Learnfare was one component of this entire initiative. Other features of the demonstration that was approved at that time include requirements for participation in training and employment-related activities, modifying the earned income disregard, and providing 12-month transitional Medicaid and child care benefits.

The Learnfare demonstration was established as part of this larger demonstration initiative because of the link between students dropping out of school and the longer receipt of AFDC. Wisconsin officials believe that requiring AFDC teens to remain in school will help break the cycle of poverty and prepare them for better jobs in the future. This is a central hypothesis that is being tested in the demonstration.

Under the originally approved demonstration, all AFDC recipients aged 13 through 19—and that includes teen parents—have been required to attend school regularly unless they are otherwise exempt or have good cause for nonattendance. If a teen does not attend school regularly, the family's monthly AFDC grant is reduced by the amount normally included for the teenager's needs for each month that they fail to comply with the requirement for school attendance.

Having taken under consideration the concerns that were expressed about the Learnfare demonstration and its potential expansion by the State to include younger children, concerns such as those that you mentioned, Senator Kohl, we have recently issued new terms and conditions for approval of enhancements to the Learnfare demonstration. We believe these represent an appropriate balance between attendance requirements and services. The enhancements relate both to the teen population that is subject to Learnfare and to the design of the project for the younger children between the ages of 6 and 12.

The modified program for teens will continue to emphasize the important goal of education and the central responsibility of students and families for school attendance. At the same time, the program will have an increased emphasis on case management and related services for teens with attendance problems, which will, I believe, increase the program's potential to accomplish the original goal.

Additional modifications to the Learnfare component stress prevention. By including families with children aged 6 through 12, Wisconsin intends to focus on school attendance problems at their onset in the early grades. To alleviate the problem of poor school attendance, the State will provide intensive services that deal with the causes of excessive school absence in an attempt to improve the likelihood of better education and, ultimately, self-sufficiency for these youngsters.

There are two primary differences between the two Learnfare project components. I think it is important to discuss those. The first is related to the timing of the case management intervention. For the teen population, following verification of absence information, case management will be offered concurrently with the imposition of a sanction for noncompliance with the attendance requirements. For families with younger children, age 6 through 12, case management will be offered at the point of verification of excessive absences. And a sanction will only be imposed if the family fails or refuses to comply with the mutually agreed upon plan of action to address problems related to the child's poor school attendance—what we call the family service plan.

The second difference between the two components of Learnfare is the evaluation design. The evaluation of Learnfare on the teen

population, which is currently underway, I might add, is based on a pre/post design. In addition, we will compare school attendance patterns of non-AFDC teens with AFDC teens before and after Learnfare. And in contrast, the evaluation of Learnfare requirements on the younger children and their families will be based on a random assignment evaluation design. Such a design will allow for an even more rigorous evaluation of the net impacts of the policy on school attendance.

The State is committed to increasing case management services and minimizing waiting periods for services identified in family service plans. The Governor has designated a half million dollars each for case management and additional alternative educational services for Learnfare students in Milwaukee, for a total of \$1 million in new State spending. It is important to point out that both will be matched 50/50 with Federal dollars. Further, the terms and conditions agreed to by the State include a provision for monitoring and reporting on the length of time between referrals for services and the receipt of services.

We believe these steps will enhance the project's potential for increasing school attendance. To further help ensure that sufficient services are available to meet the needs of Learnfare children and their families we are authorizing up to \$10 million, and that includes the \$1 million that I mentioned previously. These funds will be available to match State or county funding for services to Learnfare children and their families during this demonstration.

These services may include such things as family counseling, alternative educational activities, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, mental health counseling, transportation, child abuse and neglect services, and others that may be needed and could be added to the list.

As I mentioned before, our agreement with the State includes some very positive provisions for evaluating the effectiveness of the expanded Learnfare project through a rigorous random assignment research design. Further, Wisconsin has agreed to accelerate obtaining evaluation results of the current Learnfare system's effectiveness in promoting school attendance among teens. This will allow us to assess the effects of this policy sooner than we had originally planned to do. I think that is important given the interest in this program.

Over the years the Department and the Congress have learned much from State-initiated demonstrations which have tested and evaluated alternative policy options. Both President Bush and former-President Reagan strongly endorsed local initiatives and State/Federal partnerships to develop and test innovative models to address the problems of welfare dependency.

As you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, and have so often asserted when we have spoken in the past, the research that results from State demonstrations, supported by both waivers and funding from the Federal Government, played a central role in the enactment of the Family Support Act of 1988.

Senator MOYNIHAN. True. True. True.

Ms. BARNHART. The Wisconsin Welfare Reform Demonstration, with the Learnfare component is just one of many such State initiatives the Department has approved in the interest of providing

States the flexibility needed to develop and demonstrate new solutions to serious problems.

The modifications which the State is making to the project will, as I have stated, provide an appropriate balance between responsibility on the part of the recipient and support from the State to assist recipients in fulfilling program requirements. I want to emphasize that the modifications were a result of consideration of information from the State's experience and the comments that we received from Members of Congress, interested organizations, and the public.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Secretary, I want to thank the committee for its interest in welfare reform demonstrations. We look forward to obtaining useful findings from such initiatives. These findings will assist the Department, State agencies, and you in developing programs which effectively address the needs of AFDC recipients and provide new methods for helping us reduce dependency.

Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to try and answer any questions that you might have at this time.

Senator MOYNIHAN. You have answered a very great many already, Madam Secretary. It is a matter of personal preference, but we do not like that term "welfare reform." Reform refers to restoring to an earlier good state. There never was an earlier good state of welfare.

Let me ask you—but I want to have Senator Kohl carry the burden of the inquiry—you have modified the program in this new agreement?

Ms. BARNHART. Yes, sir; we have.

Senator MOYNIHAN. And you have brought some real evaluation into the process so we are going to find out some things, we are going to learn something out of this.

Ms. BARNHART. Yes, sir. That is certainly our hope, as it is any time that we approve a waiver under our Section 1115 demonstration authority.

Senator MOYNIHAN. I was going to say, later on we are going to hear from Professor Corbett, who is the associate scientist at the Institute for Research on Poverty. If we did nothing else in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 we did create this fine institution at the University of Wisconsin and it goes on from strength to strength.

Let me ask you a question for which I do not think you will have an answer, because I do not think an answer exists, but which an answer could exist. What proportion of children who have been on AFDC in the course of their life time, what is their graduation rate from high school? Well the answer is, of course, we do not know. But we could learn, couldn't we? It is no small group of people. We could start tracking that. couldn't we?

Ms. BARNHART. It would certainly seem that we should be able to design some way to track that, Senator. We have a lot of information in bits and pieces about the—

Senator MOYNIHAN. Tell me.

Ms. BARNHART. Well, not on that specific subject, but I was going to say information is available about AFDC recipients and their attachment to education or level of attainment. A number of nongov-

ernmental studies have been conducted, and papers have been written on that subject.

For example, there was a Ferstenberg study, I think, several years ago that demonstrated that a woman without a high school education was twice as likely to be on AFDC for example—

Senator MOYNIHAN. Yes.

Ms. BARNHART [continuing]. As one who had a high school education. Another work done by Berlin showed that every year, I believe, of secondary schooling that was completed, reduced the chance of being on AFDC by 35 percent.

That is why I say there are a number of bits and pieces that we can put together to at least get the picture and frame the notion that there is certainly some relationship between lack of education and long-term dependency. But to provide that particular statistic that you request, no, I do not have that and am not aware of its availability.

Senator MOYNIHAN. You are going to make history during your time in the executive branch. We are going to start up a real statistical profile of this program. We are going to know how many children enter it and learn something about them. Wouldn't it be interesting to know? Isn't it important to know?

Ms. BARNHART. It would certainly be interesting to know. I must say, Mr. Chairman, that the requests that you make are not easy ones to accomplish. As you know, we are still working on your earlier request, but we are working on it to accomplish that.

Senator MOYNIHAN. But remember what we said when we started out. The Bureau of Labor Statistics was started in 1882. Then it took them 60 years to figure out how to measure unemployment, but they got there.

Senator Kohl, sir?

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Senator Moynihan.

Primarily, Ms. Barnhart, I want to commend you for an outstanding job. You have given this program a real chance for making a difference and all of us appreciate that very much.

If you had to identify the two or three most significant changes and/or improvements in the program—things that reflect the Department's interests and waivers—what would you say they are?

Ms. BARNHART. In my statement, Senator Kohl, I talked about a significant improvement, and that is a better balance between requirements and services. The State proposed providing case management services prior to taking a sanction action with the family, and developing a family service plan for the families of the children age 6 to 12, and we certainly agreed and encouraged it. So that can truly be an early intervention or prevention program for the elementary school aged children, so that hopefully we can avoid education attendance problems as they reach the higher grades.

For the teen population, I would say that the improvement is similar in that we now have an assurance that case management and services will be available to roughly 92 percent of the potential Learnfare population. I would like to explain why 92 percent. In the counties where 35 or fewer students are sanctioned, there will not be specific additional funding specified for case management or

services, but rather the counties will be asked to absorb that with their current staffing.

I think an important piece of that teen program is the monitoring and tracking that I spoke of in my statement. The State will report on a quarterly basis, by exception, the number of students who are experiencing what we call a substantial waiting period before receiving the case management or the services because, obviously, the State is making a real effort to provide those. We certainly have an interest at the Department in having those additional services provided, and we want to make sure that it is in fact taking place. So we put that reporting requirement in as well.

While I am very comfortable with the pre-post evaluation design that existed in the original program, I am particularly pleased that the State has agreed to and is able to expedite the findings from that pre-post design for the teens so that we can get the data in September of 1991 as opposed, I believe, to December 1993. Given the increased focus and attention this program has received, it is very important to get the best data we can get at the earliest possible time.

I also consider the evaluation component for the 6 to 12-year-olds, to be an improvement. We will have a random assignment experimental design which should help us sort out net impacts very well.

Senator KOHL. Thank you. In any negotiating process you never get everything you want. If you could have had one or two other things in this 13 to 19-year-old extension, what would you have hoped to get?

Ms. BARNHART. Well, that is an interesting question, Senator. I have to say that the negotiations with the State were characterized, I think, by cooperation and willingness on both sides—ours as well as the State's. We looked at all available information. They made suggestions; we made suggestions. I think we were all working towards the same goal, which was to end up with the best possible program design we could and to be responsive to individuals like yourself.

I met with a number of representatives from special interest groups, as you know—local community organizations in Wisconsin and so forth. And I believe that the terms and conditions represent the Department's interest as well as the State's interest quite effectively.

Senator KOHL. I believe you all had concerns given the Government structure between the counties and the State that the State might somehow be limited in its ability to leverage cooperation from the counties. How does the agreement attempt to deal with that?

Ms. BARNHART. Well I think there is that concern. The situation I described, if there are under 35 sanctions in a particular county, is the reason we did put the monitoring and tracking provision in. So if that problem exists and if the counties are unable to respond, or unwilling to respond, we will be able to identify that early on.

I would hope that the fact that we are able to promise Federal matching money, for services money that is available at either the State or the county level, would perhaps be an inducement for counties to participate and to be more cooperative because they

can, in effect, double the dollars that are available to their "at risk" caseload, which the Learnfare children are certainly a part of.

Senator KOHL. In connection with that, as you are probably aware, last Wednesday a Milwaukee County committee voted to defer action on \$750,000 in case management assistance which was the first of the State/Federal matching money for the current program. If this sort of thing becomes prevalent, what mechanisms are in the agreement to protect the families from what would be strictly punitive action?

Ms. BARNHART. Well, I was aware that that happened, Senator Kohl. I do not have all the details on that, but it was my understanding that the county wanted to make sure that the \$750,000 is going to be sufficient to provide the additional services. I am sure Ms. Goodrich can respond to that in more detail when she appears.

But I would say that the terms and conditions are exactly as stated—terms and conditions. And if there is a problem in the terms and conditions being met, obviously it would necessitate action on the part of the Department. We would approach the State and find out exactly what is happening and if, in fact, the State can continue to meet the terms and conditions because they are the prerequisite for continuing the waiver.

Senator KOHL. Ms. Barnhart, your Department appears supportive of the notion that case management backed up by services must be available to the families of 6 to 12-year-olds prior to sanctioning. Can you tell me if the Department took a position on that same concept—services before sanctions—to be applied to the existing program; and in your opinion, would that have been a desirable outcome?

Ms. BARNHART. We were very interested in beefing up the services component altogether. And we were particularly pleased when the State proposed to provide those additional services for the 6 to 12-year-olds, and we were interested in services being available to a greater extent for the teen population.

One of the things that we discussed during the negotiation and, I think, an important point to make here, is that when a child is between the ages of 6 and 12, school attendance to a greater degree is contingent upon the involvement of the parents. I mean there are probably very few 6 or 7-year-olds that get themselves to school every day on their own. I certainly would hope that is not the case. I am hoping that there is parental involvement.

Therefore, we felt it was appropriate to guarantee in effect that case management services and a family service plan would be in effect prior to a sanction for that type of situation. With the teenage population, the amount of individual responsibility, I think, increases for a teenager when it comes to getting to school. There is certainly parental responsibility, no question about it. But at the same time, I think you can expect a teen to assert a little more individual responsibility than an elementary school student.

So I believe the Department's position was, we wanted to have case management services running the gambit from age 6 until graduation, in effect, but at a level that reflected an appropriate balance between the appropriate level of individual responsibility and the Agency's support.

Senator KOHL. Well in just following that line of reasoning for a minute, if the teen is more liable to be making his own judgment and less liable to be under the parents' ability to get him to school, then it would seem to me that even more so at that population level, would you be wanting to understand the situation level before you sanctioned?

Ms. BARNHART. Well we do have case management provided to the teens. Another important point is what it takes to get to the sanction status. I did not address this in my testimony, and I think it may be helpful for the context of the entire hearing.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Why don't you?

Ms. BARNHART. That is, a student must have 10 unexcused absences in a semester before he/she is put on monitoring. Once they are monitored by the State, if they have two absences in a particular month, unexcused absences, at that point the sanction would be undertaken.

Senator MOYNIHAN. What is the norm for your all-American Wisconsin boy or girl? Ten is twice the average?

Ms. BARNHART. I don't know exactly what the average is, Senator. I believe the information indicates that the AFDC students, as opposed to non-AFDC students, miss about 3 days a year more than the non-AFDC students. I can tell you that relationship.

Senator MOYNIHAN. It is only 3 more days a year?

Ms. BARNHART. Roughly, I believe so.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Unbelievable.

Ms. BARNHART. I believe that's correct. One of the other people coming up later might have better information, but I think that is the case.

Senator MOYNIHAN. That is kind of important.

Ms. BARNHART. At the point that the student has two additional unexcused absences, which is 12 unexcused absences in that semester, the case managers are to make every possible effort to contact the family and the school to verify the truancy information. In other words, case managers may not simply take it off of a report or a piece of paper, but must attempt to determine if there was in fact some reason that was not noted.

Then the family has a 10-day notice before the sanction is actually put into effect. So I think it is important to point out that it is not a matter of something happens and, without any warning whatsoever, all of a sudden the family is sanctioned. There is some interaction between the case manager and the family, even in the case of the teens. And I do think that is important.

Senator KOHL. Thank you very much. I think you have been really helpful all along and everybody appreciates it, Ms. Barnhart.

Ms. BARNHART. Well thank you very much, Senator. I would just like to say that your staff was particularly helpful to us in providing us with information all along the way; and it contributed very much to our discussions with the State. It was very helpful to us as well.

Senator KOHL. Thank you.

Senator MOYNIHAN. With not making any comparisons with other colleagues, it has been a special experience for this committee to have a Senator who is not a member take an interest in wel-

fare legislation. You are the first, sir. Well, no, ole Barbara Mikulski, she's always there too.

Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. Note how helpful it is to put a number on something. Is 10 truancies just 2 more than the average for the population or is it twice the number? Are the standard deviations really quite different from others so that you have a median that is much higher than the average, that kind of thing. One group over here has a lot of trouble and you put a number on something like a football score and you know more about the outcome, don't you?

Thank you very much.

Ms. BARNHART. Thank you, Senator.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Barnhart appears in the appendix.]

Senator MOYNIHAN. Now we are going to hear from Secretary Goodrich—Secretary Patricia A. Goodrich, of the Department of Health and Social Services of the State of Wisconsin—Madison, WI. We welcome you, Madam Secretary; and you have a colleague with you.

Ms. GOODRICH. Yes, I do, Senator Moynihan. If I may, I would like to introduce Sylvia Jackson who is the administrator of our division of economic support. We are a rather large umbrella organization in Wisconsin and Sylvania is the immediate administrator of the program.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Ms. Jackson, the committee welcomes you and we look forward to hearing from you as well.

Ms. GOODRICH. Actually, she is here to help me in case I miss on some numbers. So I have not asked her to prepare any remarks.

STATEMENT OF PATRICIA A. GOODRICH, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, STATE OF WISCONSIN, MADISON, WI, ACCOMPANIED BY SYLVIA JACKSON, ADMINISTRATOR, DIVISION OF ECONOMIC SUPPORT

Ms. GOODRICH. Good morning. My name is Patricia Goodrich and I am secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services. I am accompanied by Silvia Jackson who is the administrator of our division of economic support. Thank you very much for inviting Governor Thompson to address you and for allowing me to appear for him today. It is truly a pleasure and an honor to be testifying before you on Wisconsin's Learnfare Program.

To one degree or another we are all products of the environments in which we were raised. What is it, then, that enables some individuals to succeed in spite of their childhood and adolescent environments? What is the difference between those that do make their way out of poverty to become producers for society and those who do not?

Governor Thompson believes that education and parental involvement are the answers. With the help of the State legislature, the Federal Government, client advocates, and local administrators he has put forward the Learnfare Program, incorporating both of these powerful tools—employing them in Wisconsin's overall effort to reduce welfare dependency.

Implemented in 1988 over 27,000 AFDC teens are presently covered by Learnfare. The program utilizes financial sanctions in conjunction with supportive services to achieve its goal. Learnfare requires that essentially all Wisconsin teens eligible for welfare benefits attend school regularly.

A program such as Learnfare is clearly needed when one considers that for every 100 students who start high school in Milwaukee less than 60 finish.

Senator MOYNIHAN. That is Milwaukee as against a State rate of 85 percent; isn't that right—85.4 percent?

Ms. GOODRICH. As a completion rate, that sounds correct.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Okay. Milwaukee is a county as well as a city; is that correct?

Ms. GOODRICH. That is right. But we are talking about the county.

Considering the outlook for a high school drop out in today's job market, this translates to an astounding waste of human potential as well as a serious and ongoing financial responsibility for Wisconsin taxpayers. The philosophy which underlies Learnfare is straightforward. The State has an obligation to provide financial assistance to families who, for whatever reason, are unable to support themselves in the work place. In return, these families have an obligation to get their children to school regularly, which will ultimately enable them to compete in the job market and avoid a life of welfare dependency.

Learnfare allows us to do what needs to be done to meet this goal. If a teen parent is not in school because he or she lacks adequate day care, arrangements are made to ensure that Learnfare day care is provided.

If transportation is required to and from the day care facility, Learnfare will also pay for that.

Some teens simply cannot succeed in regular classroom environment.

Learnfare will pay tuition costs for those drop outs who require alternative educational programs to succeed in school.

Even more teens will benefit from Learnfare over the next 12 months due to Governor Thompson's direction that additional State discretionary desegregation money be used for Learnfare alternative education in the Milwaukee public school system. When matched by the Federal Government, this will total over \$1 million.

Teens—who may otherwise have been lost, will continue to be given a second chance because of Learnfare and these alternative education funds.

Still other teens have severe family problems which negatively impact their school attendance. Governor Thompson recently approved State funding which, when matched by equal Federal waiver savings dollars, will total \$1 million to assist such teens. This funding is to be used for additional Learnfare case managers who will specialize in working with the whole family to identify and address the underlying causes of poor school attendance.

And if I may at this time, Senator Kohl, address the question you asked of Secretary Barnhart. I believe the Milwaukee committee acted as they did because they wanted to hear some direct in-

formation from individuals from our Department. I will be making that offer to visit with them at some later time to explain the dollars and the program.

Finally, some teens just do not want to go to school and unfortunately, receive no support and encouragement from their parents.

For this group the Learnfare sanction is available to serve as catalyst—a catalyst for teens to take responsibility for their action and inaction, and for parents to take responsibility for their children.

Is the sanction fair? It is indeed. It is fair because it is balanced by a supportive service network. This network includes, but is not limited to, the supportive services previously mentioned.

In closing, let me say that I firmly believe that Learnfare works.

I am not yet able to give you the complete statistical breakdown to show how Learnfare serves as the primary motivation for teens to attend school regularly.

The independent, formal evaluation is not due until mid-1993, although we will be accelerating some of the early findings.

Why, then, do I believe in this program?

Because the goal is worthy: to reduce welfare dependency by educating our children for the work place. Because the philosophy is sound. AFDC families have an obligation to society in return for the assistance they receive.

Because supportive services and sanctions are balanced so as to provide the incentive and the means for teens to attend school regularly.

Finally, because all kinds of people tell me it is working. People like: William B. Adams, Human Services Director in an industrialized Racine County, who tell us, "We have not had to sanction many families for noncompliance. However, we have been able to use Learnfare as a vehicle to bring the problems of AFDC children and their families to the attention of the public decisionmakers."

And Earl Garrison, an Eau Claire High School, the assistant principal, in charge of attendance, who says, "Some kids just need that extra boost to get to school and that has helped. Its a step in the right direction."

And teen parents, like Cindy Spencer of intercity Milwaukee who dropped out of school at the age of 17 but is back now at age 19 and will graduate this December with honors. Cindy writes, "I give all my thanks to the people of Learnfare who have changed my life for the better and made this possible."

The State of Wisconsin has been listening. We have increased our commitment to case management and alternative education for teens with attendance problems.

Thanks to the Department of Health and Human Services' recent approval of our waiver request to expand Learnfare to include children 6 through 12, we have the opportunity to build on this successful program.

The waiver, filed in the fall of 1989, focuses on the prevention of attendance problems and will allow us to address them at their onset in the early grades. At the same time, it will enhance our ability to respond effectively to the root causes of poor attendance among young children through case management, prior to sanctioning.

I wish to thank you again for the opportunity to share Wisconsin's Learnfare experience with you and urge you to support our continuing efforts to address this most important issue. At this time I am prepared to answer any questions you may have on Learnfare.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Well thank you for a very able and open testimony, Madam Secretary.

Yes, just a few questions. First of all, let the record show that Wisconsin has been certainly more than responsible as States go in this area. One of the great social crimes of the past generation—and I say this to Senator Kohl—is that while the talk about poverty is continued and programs multiply, contract and expand, and while spending on social programs under the Social Security Act has gone up very greatly for the aged, the provision for children has gone down.

Since 1970 we have cut the provision for children under the AFDC program in the median state by one-third. If in 1970 a person would come along and say, I have a plan. I would like to save money by cutting the amount of money children on welfare get for food by a third, they would say, "You are a monster." But that is what we did. We do it quietly by not keeping up with inflation.

Wisconsin has not completely avoided that. But I think you have done a little better—the benefit reduction has only been, in real terms, 14 percent. Wisconsin, you might tell them back home, you have only cut the benefit for children by 14 percent. You have a much better record than, say, my State or the Nation.

But why did you think this was a problem? Did you have any data that told you, any numbers that told you, that children from welfare families were dropping out from school more than non-welfare families?

Ms. GOODRICH. The concerns that were raised to Governor Thompson during his 1988 campaign, as I mentioned in my more formal remarks that I did not give to you today, but are in writing for the committee—

Senator MOYNIHAN. Yes, and they will be included in the record as if read.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Goodrich appears in the appendix.]

Ms. GOODRICH. Yes. That Governor Thompson became very much aware as he traveled around the State that the welfare situation as far as the taxpayers were concerned was a serious problem. The interesting thing was, he put together a group of four legislators, two from each of the Wisconsin Houses, as well as my predecessor, Secretary Tim Cullen, of the Department, and they worked at length on proposals that the Governor had in total and Learnfare as was mentioned by Secretary Barnhart was one piece of that component.

No, we did not have figures that would show us that AFDC youngsters were dropping out or stopping out more than non-AFDC youngsters. What we do have is the fact that has been put together that if you do not have an education you are much more likely to be on AFDC and that was the concern of the Governor, not to perpetuate that program.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Fair enough. But it always helps if you have that.

Ms. GOODRICH. I know it does. I know it does.

Senator MOYNIHAN. It is interesting that Wisconsin has, as against your population, a slightly smaller proportion of the AFDC population than the population itself would indicate.

Senator Kohl, sir?

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Senator Moynihan.

It is nice to have you with us today.

Ms. GOODRICH. Thank you.

Ms. JACKSON. Thank you.

Senator KOHL. I am very familiar with all the years you have devoted to education and it is clear from your testimony that you have a very real and deep commitment to reducing chronic welfare dependency through education.

Just a couple of questions I would like to ask. As part of the State's request to expand the program to 6 to 13-year-olds you asked for prior services for that new population. Can you tell us the rationale for not doing the same for the existing population?

Ms. GOODRICH. I think I will pick up on the remarks that Assistant Secretary Barnhart made earlier. That is, that we too felt that from the lessons we had learned and in observing the Learnfare Program as it was in existence, as you expand it to the younger population who are the 6-year-old, the 7-year-old, generally does what the parents say to do. And so they are subjected to more parental responsibility than perhaps teenagers. And having raised three teenagers into the young adulthood I know whereof I speak.

But as they get to be teenagers they assume and are given more responsibility for themselves. I think it has been borne out to us that it is just that, for example, I will show you that in Rock County we had an AFDC mother who until her sanction was to occur for her grant because her son had been truant, had no idea that her young son was having problems, and was in fact having alcohol and drug problems. And she was able to get help for him. The program in Rock County was able to serve him and the young man is now back in school; and, of course, the minute he went back to school there was no sanction.

But it gets the attention of the parent. And, no, we did not consider having a sanction after the services for teenagers. We felt that there were very good reasons to have the services parallel concurrent with the sanction for teenagers.

Senator KOHL. Ms. Goodrich, there has been some misrepresentation, I believe, on both sides on the following issue and I want to understand better what we mean by availability of services. In your statement you said that Learnfare covers 27,000 teens monthly and uses sanctions in conjunction with supportive services.

By supportive services I presume you mean case management, alternative education, child care and transportation?

Ms. GOODRICH. Yes.

Senator KOHL. Do you believe that those services are as accessible for the 13 to 17-year-olds as they are for the 18 to 19-year-olds?

Ms. GOODRICH. Senator, I guess I would have said yes if you had asked me that question before I read a legislative audit bureau study of what occurred with the youngsters that we were able to

assist in returning to the Milwaukee Public School System. We discovered that there was no alternative education program for them, which dismays me.

As I mentioned to you earlier today, as a former member of the Assembly Education Committee in the Wisconsin Legislature I was a part of the beginning of that program which became a statutory requirement that youngsters who were at risk of dropping out of school, who were children at risk, would be provided alternative education programs. There is the provision in our State statutes for youngsters who are truant to also be provided alternative education programs and it dismays me greatly to learn that those programs are not there.

That is not my bailiwick as the Secretary of Health and Social Services, but it dismays me that those classes have not been provided for the youngsters. Mrs. Jackson and I were talking earlier, even earlier this morning, that it is something we need to address with the school system—well, with the Department of Public Instruction as well.

Senator KOHL. Good.

In your opinion, how would you assess the availability of drug and alcohol and child abuse services, family counseling and mental health services through this population?

Ms. GOODRICH. Senator, those services aren't nearly as available as they ought to be for all members of society; and we are continually struggling. I think the Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor agreeing by signing pieces of legislation have gone a long way with the dollars that they have appropriated for those programs.

But as you know with a county administered system, we simply are the pass through for those dollars, helping with the implementation of those programs; but we are a long way from having services to assist everybody, whether they are AFDC or non-AFDC in Wisconsin's population.

Senator KOHL. These are the services that you hope to make much more available in the extension?

Ms. GOODRICH. Yes, we do. And you will remember that Assistant Secretary Barnhart referenced the Federal matching dollars. The dollars will be able to be matched, not only with the State dollars, which we were doing with the desegregation money, but they will be able to be matched to county dollars that are already not being matched to Federal money. So we see counties being able to, without any direction from us, provide those services.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Senator, could I just interject on that point to note that Wisconsin had its JOBS program in place July 1 a year ago—right on the moment that the Federal money was available. This is entitlement money. You do not have to ask for it; it is yours. Well, you have to ask for it, but you do not have to get it appropriated and hope it will come along and so forth. I wish I could say as much for my own State which has not done a thing.

Senator KOHL. Thank you.

One of the things that disturbed me about the UWM study with the number of sanctioned kids who were already into the child abuse and neglect reporting system. To what extent is their overlap between the population of AFDC families subject to Learnfare and the county abuse and neglect case loads. Do we have data on the

numbers at risk and assessment of the need for services in that area and what are the current plans to address that problem?

Ms. GOODRICH. I will answer more generally, and if I may, I will ask Mrs. Jackson if she has any specific figures on that area. We were—I do not want to use the word “pleased” but we were—we had our feelings confirmed by the ETI study that indeed showed that the youngsters that were becoming subject to the Learnfare sanction were already youngsters who are in other parts of our organization, the services that we are having to provide. I think it simply verified the gut reaction that we had that some of these youngsters might be in our juvenile system, some might be in our child abuse and neglect system.

I think—and Sylvia may have the numbers and the dollar figures—you will see in the State of Wisconsin that we have increasingly tried to put the funds out for child abuse and neglect and have in fact just made a decision this last Thursday how new money that was appropriated by the legislature in its spring session, the majority of which—not all of it, but I can say the majority—will be going to Milwaukee.

Ms. JACKSON. Senators, it is a pleasure to be here. Just to add on to what Secretary Goodrich has said, the ETI report shows that of the sanctioned population that roughly 40 percent are already known to the human service system in Milwaukee County. That does not surprise us because the AFDC population is at risk of having other problems as well.

We have in the last year seen a significant increase in human service funding statewide through our community aids allocation. We anticipate that there is approximately \$17 million more going out in human services funding statewide. That will actually help meet some of the needs of this population which will also be able to match with Federal financial participation.

So there are more dollars and the need is clearly there.

Senator KOHL. Well, thank you both very much. One of the reasons you cited for why you believe in the Learnfare Program is, “Supportive services and sanctions are balanced so as to provide the incentive and the means for teens to attend school regularly.” I think that is a very important statement, a very important concept and I would like to hope that that is the direction in which we are going. I believe it is.

And to that extent, to the extent that it is, you certainly can call on me for all the support that you need to see to it that the program becomes useful and constructive and achieves what it is intended to achieve. I very much appreciate your coming here today to talk to us.

Ms. GOODRICH. Thank you, Senator.

Ms. JACKSON. Thank you.

Ms. GOODRICH. We appreciate the opportunity, Senator Kohl, Senator Moynihan.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Might I just join Senator Kohl in his observation. Nothing is more clear from this testimony and, Secretary, your reputation precedes you in this committee, that there is nothing punitive intended here and nothing retaliatory. We want to get these kids to graduate from high school. And you never did a kid

any harm by letting him know you are interested in what is happening to him/her.

Ms. GOODRICH. Thank you, Senator.

Senator MOYNIHAN. I guess maybe still the only real bit of social science we have about these things is if you go back to Western Electric, isn't that right, in the 1920's, that great experiment in which they try to see what happened to the productivity of women workers in a plant and they kept giving them more, improving their conditions and their productivity went up; and they improved it some more and it went up. Then they took all the improvements away and it went up again. And the only thing they could judge is that the women workers thought people were interested in how they were doing, how they were performing, so they performed better.

You cannot ever do any harm to a teenager by saying we would like to know whether you are showing up in class. And there are parents—of course there are parents who do not know. There are a lot of things we parents do not know and probably do not hurt us, but it might hurt the child.

We want to hear what our other panelists say. But the main thing is, I just have to say in closing, what a wonderful thing to be able to hear the Secretary of Health and Social Services be able to talk about a case. I mean you are still in the range where, you know, these are still people to you.

Ms. GOODRICH. Yes, they are.

Senator MOYNIHAN. With us they are just 1 million persons. It could overwhelm a city, but you are not overwhelmed. Steady on. On Wisconsin.

Ms. GOODRICH. Thank you.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Now we are going to hear from a panel from that most distinguished of universities. I wonder if Dr. Corbett could come forward, Dr. Quinn and Mr. Pawasarat. Here we are. You are very welcome too.

Dr. Corbett is, as I mentioned earlier, the associate scientist at the Institute for Research on Poverty. We are very pleased to have you, sir.

Mr. CORBETT. I am pleased to be here, sir.

Senator MOYNIHAN. We have learned so much over the years from that.

Dr. Quinn is just a plain scientist at the Employment and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. And Mr. Pawasarat—do I have that right, sir?

Dr. PAWASARAT. Pawasarat.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Pawasarat, sorry. Who is also at the Employment and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. So you will all know a good deal about this.

Mr. Corbett, you are first on our list and would you proceed, sir?

STATEMENT OF THOMAS J. CORBETT, PH.D., ASSOCIATE SCIENTIST, INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON POVERTY, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON, MADISON, WI

Dr. CORBETT. Well it is a pleasure to be here, Senator. First of all I want to concur with your prior statement that the creation of the

institute during the war on poverty was one of the few successes of that war.

Senator MOYNIHAN. I will leave it right there.

Dr. CORBETT. Okay.

I think that Learnfare is controversial, not necessarily because it is a new idea, but rather because it is an old idea. I think it is emblematic of a shift back to the traditional way of providing public assistance. Before, we had an income definition of poverty and an entitlement concept which emerged with considerable force in the early 1970's. Aid, in part, now is to be conditioned on behavior. And some fear that those conditions will multiply. There is a proposal in Indiana to sanction drug felons, for example.

We are incapacitated by a desire to address behavioral dependency—a real problem—and by an appalling lack of consensus on how to do that. We talk about new social contracts but the character of such arrangements remains to be worked out. The bottom line is that we are getting back into the people changing business and that is a damn hard undertaking.

In reflecting on the current Learnfare debate I was struck by three mysteries, and maybe these mysteries provide some lessons for us. How did the debate get so acrimonious? Why are we learning so little from this social experiment? And what will it take to achieve the larger objectives of reaching disadvantaged and at-risk kids. Here, Learnfare is just one intervention among many around the country.

The Wisconsin Learnfare model may be in an end-game stage, foundering in the midst of ideological disputes or it could be a point of departure toward a more adequate response to the underlying challenge. The mysteries. The debate is acrimonious in part because of past errors made during the policy development process. In my written remarks I use the acronym "SADLIE"—sensing and analyzing a problem, designing and legitimizing a response, and implementing and evaluating a program.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Your statement will be put in the record as if read, as will all statements.

Dr. CORBETT. Okay.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Go right ahead. Yes, I see SADLIE here.

Dr. CORBETT. Maybe it is an appropriate acronym. I am not sure.

Senator MOYNIHAN. I see SADLIE.

Dr. CORBETT. In any case, let me briefly say that problems were made at each stage. The program was developed in a crisis atmosphere. There was too little analysis. Too many assumptions, some very glib. It became too large and unwieldy an undertaking. It was too hastily developed, and was a bit unbalanced. It stressed sanctions too much, was too quickly implemented, and the presumed effects were touted prematurely and without substantiation.

That raises the big point. Why haven't we learned more about this program? I am sure the evaluators will glean as much as they can from the available numbers, but they will still be very limited numbers. We need to know more about impacts—and impacts go well beyond attendance—about process, about how to do this kind of program and about what is needed, about getting into the supply and demand issues related to services, alternative education slots and a bunch of other things. A lot of these remain mysteries.

What we have now are outcome numbers with "success rates" ranging anywhere from 30 to 70 percent. But a 70-percent figure does not prove the program is working, nor does a 30-percent rate prove it is not working. Outcomes or post-participation measurements are not the same as impacts which are a comparison of outcomes between experimentals and controls.

Still, I think even now we can go beyond the experimental design that will be imposed upon the expanded Learnfare population. I think we could go back to the original population, was new cohorts, and develop an experiment with several groups; controls, a case management service intervention concurrent with the sanction, a case management service intervention prior to any sanction, and perhaps a case management service intervention only. I think that would tell us an awful lot about the marginal differences generated by these different approaches.

Remember, the results that we find from the experiment for the 6 to 12-year-olds may not apply to the teen population. It would be, perhaps, inappropriate to make that kind of judgment. After the current debate, we need a policy discussion on this whole issue. I think the fear and/or concern evoked by powerful images of an underclass is pushing social policy back into the people changing business. This is far more expensive and complex than simply giving people money. Predictably Learnfare is drifting away from a hard approach, a reliance on sanctions, towards a softer version that emphasizes supports as well as threats for the client. And if that trend continues, a contribution to the national discussion is possible.

But this trend will mean a marriage of sorts between several systems—the welfare system, the primary and secondary education system, the social service network, the labor market, and the post-secondary education system. We all know this is difficult. We know it is difficult from how hard it is to develop a good work-welfare program, and we know it is difficult from the early Wisconsin Learnfare experience.

So we must proceed carefully, slowly, collaboratively, dispassionately, and in a nonpartisan manner. Wisconsin did a bit of a better job in developing its Work/Welfare Program in that respect.

This subcommittee is well aware that, historically U.S. child poverty rates are embarrassingly high among Western industrial countries—two to three times as high a decade ago. During the 1980's the impoverishment of children has grown worse, yet welfare reform is discussed as a poverty that did not matter. We have always known:—

Senator MOYNIHAN. Dr. Corbett, that was not clear what you just said. Welfare reform is?

Dr. CORBETT. Is discussed as if poverty does not matter.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Okay.

Dr. CORBETT. We have always known how to reduce welfare costs and caseloads—lower guarantees, restrict access, impose conditions. The real challenge is, and always has been, to reduce dependency and poverty at the same time. For that task, there are no silver bullets.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Corbett appears in the appendix.]

Senator MOYNIHAN. Dr. Quinn?

STATEMENT OF LOIS M. QUINN, PH.D., SCIENTIST, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE, MILWAUKEE, WI

Dr. QUINN. Thank you, Senator Moynihan, Senator Kohl, members of the staff. It is a pleasure to be here in response to your request to provide information on our evaluation of the Wisconsin Learnfare policy, report on our progress to date, and answer your questions and concerns.

In July 1989 the Employment and Training Institute of Wisconsin-Milwaukee entered into contract to evaluate the Learnfare portion of the Welfare Waivers, which had been approved in October of 1987 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the State Department of Health and Social Services. Our research design for the evaluation was approved in December 1989 with the final evaluation report due June 30, 1993.

Our institute also received the contract to evaluate Wisconsin's Work Experience and Job Training Program and the Community Work Experience Program for the State of Wisconsin. Because of having both these evaluations, we will be able to use the work on the Workfare evaluation to complement Learnfare, and allow for analysis of teens who are exempted from the Learnfare schooling requirement or who graduate or age into Workfare Programs.

Like the Family Support Act of 1988 Wisconsin's Learnfare policy has as its goal assuring that AFDC family members obtain the skills needed to help them avoid long-term welfare dependence. The intent of the Learnfare policy was articulated in the Wisconsin waiver request to the Federal Government. It stated:

"For teens school attendance is the appropriate equivalence of adult work and should be treated as seriously as work. The school requirement for all teen members of AFDC households will permit the State to give the teens a clearly understandable and monetarily tangible reason to pursue their education. Obviously, in and of itself, it may not be sufficient to motivate a teen to continue schooling. However, used in conjunction with a wide range of school and social service programs it should increase the overall effectiveness of the State's efforts to educate these children. This should reduce the likelihood of their future welfare dependence."

Learnfare targets not only teen parents receiving AFDC but also teen dependents who reside with a natural or adoptive parent. The critical outcome for older teens affected by the Learnfare experiment is economic self-sufficiency, which will be measured by data on each individual's subsequent welfare history and labor market experience.

The Wisconsin employee wage reporting system will be used for both the Learnfare and the Workfare evaluations. This database which is already matched against AFDC client populations for welfare fraud purposes provides quarterly earnings on all AFDC participants. The data will be available for all persons living in the State whether they remain on welfare or not. Other expected outcomes include high school completion, improved school performance, as measured by credit attainment and grades earned, im-

proved attendance and reduced incidents of female teen AFDC recipients child bearing.

The school data will be obtained through examination of student records in the Milwaukee public schools and five representative school districts in other parts of the State. This data will be supplemented by State records on GED certificates and high school equivalency diplomas issued. Birth records are available statewide through the Department of Health and Social Services to measure subsequent births to participants.

The most reliable measures of Learnfare success—transition to employment, post-program AFDC status of teen parents, high school completion, and school credit attainment—will only be meaningful when compared with a similar population for the 2-year period before the Learnfare experiment.

What we can present to the committee today is only preliminary information on certain social characteristics of teens and families sanctioned under the Learnfare policy in Milwaukee County, the State's largest urban area. The Learnfare evaluation contract required an examination of the characteristics of families who were sanctioned under Learnfare.

Furthermore, the State-appointed Learnfare Advisory Committee in its first meeting asked us to examine social problems and identified social service needs of chronically sanctioned families in Milwaukee County. With the cooperation of the County Department of Health and Social Services and the Board of Supervisors, our institute examined over 4 million computerized records from data bases in Milwaukee County.

SENATOR MOYNIHAN. Four million?

DR. QUINN. Four million.

And unfortunately, we have used up a lot of work-study students who did about 10,000 visual matches, where we had birthdates that did not match, but the names matched and there was a slight variation.

The county has a particular interest in pulling together their systems and we were doing an evaluation for that. We were fortunate that they also allowed us to use those records for the Learnfare evaluation and match the experience that they had on county residents with the experience we were gaining on the Learnfare sanctioning.

We also looked at all of the Children's Court system records in the county since 1979, social service records, and records on individuals in the income maintenance system.

Since Learnfare sanctions impact on the entire family unit in the critical area of child abuse or neglect, we examined these problems for the family unit rather than just the specific teenager whose failure to attend school triggered the family's AFDC benefit reduction. So if there was abuse and neglect reported for a sibling, we also considered that as a family problem impacting on that family.

Our first report, "The Impact of Learnfare on Milwaukee County Social Service Clients," which has been attached for the committee members—

SENATOR MOYNIHAN. And it will be part of the record.

DR. QUINN [continuing]. Thank you—summarizes the results of the research utilizing Milwaukee County's social service data.

[The information appears in the appendix.]

Dr. QUINN. Briefly stated, the findings include: In the 16-month period from September 1988 through December 1989 the families of 6,612 Milwaukee County teens were sanctioned for failure to meet Learnfare school attendance requirements.

As State officials anticipated, many teens sanctioned under Learnfare were in families with problems of child abuse or neglect; 1,327 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare were in families identified by Milwaukee County social service workers or the Children's Court system as having suspected or documented problems with child abuse or neglect. These youth comprised 20 percent of all sanctioned teens in the county.

We also looked at Children's Court records, and these would include children who had an event in court either because they were victims in need of protective services or who had committed delinquent acts. And when these teens who had been in the Children's Court system were added to teens living in families coded for possible abuse or neglect, they comprised 2,722 of the 6,612 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned, or 41 percent of the total.

Teens in families coded for possible abuse or neglect or in the Children's Court system received a total of 10,195 monthly sanctions and accounted for \$1.5 million of the AFDC savings attributed to Learnfare for the 16 month period.

Another consequence of Learnfare is the sanctioning of AFDC parents who take in foster children and AFDC families contracting with Milwaukee County to provide family day care. In those cases while the foster children or the day care children are not under the Learnfare requirement, we have statistics on the number of families who were sanctioned for their own children's failure to meet Learnfare.

The new Federal waiver requires an examination of the availability of services and the timeliness of providing services to 13 to 19-year-old sanctioned teens. The new Federal waiver should allow for improved recordkeeping to determine the specific services provided to each of these clients as well as services provided to an additional 3,300 in-school teens in Milwaukee County who have been sanctioned for poor attendance and 2,300 teens sanctioned in other parts of the State.

Presently, we know that day care for children of teen mothers and transportation monies to and from day care have been provided in the State and contracts written for alternative education.

Analysis of services is critical since the Learnfare policy as presently constituted is dependent for its cost savings upon exemptions from the JOBS legislation which requires identification of supportive services and needs of family circumstances prior to sanctioning and a conciliation procedure to resolve disputes related to clients' participation in JOBS programs.

It is the position of the Department of Health and Social Service Administrators that social service needs of Learnfare families can be adequately addressed by existing school and county social service staff. The Job Service staff responsible for serving teens sanctioned as dropouts do not presently receive school records or county information on identified social service needs of sanctioned teens,

and the alternative education programs have access to these records only upon request by the client.

While the names of over 3,300 teens sanctioned in Milwaukee County as school dropouts or for failure to report their school status have been given to three case managers employed by Wisconsin Job Service, only alternative school placements are currently provided and financed. Families of in-school youth requesting social services assistance, other than for day care or transportation, are encouraged by the Milwaukee County Hotline and income maintenance unit workers to contact public school social workers.

Tracking services to Learnfare sanctioned families is now problematic. School social workers are now expected by State social service administrators to provide social services to families of in-school youth sanctioned under Learnfare, but do not have access to county or State social service records identifying these families' documented problems.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Could I just ask you, that is just a procedural question, isn't it, not having access? Can that be worked out? I would think.

Dr. QUINN. I think there are a number of issues there and some relate to the privacy of the records, on both the social service side and the school side.

Senator MOYNIHAN. All right.

Dr. QUINN. Then in conclusion I would say that we work with Department of Labor programs which routinely require documentation of services provided, including names of clients served, the specific dates of services, and hours of training or service provided. These input data are then measured against specific client populations, including minorities, high school dropouts, or single parents.

We have found the social service system to date far less likely to even record services provided, let alone the duration or intended outcomes. Without such recordkeeping of State and Federally funded services and referrals we will be unable, for example, to track services or referrals provided for the subpopulation of the 1,300 teens already identified as members of Milwaukee County families with suspected or documented problems of abuse and neglect.

Our attached report identifies additional evaluation issues raised by this data from Milwaukee County and John Pawasarat will describe data currently available on the Learnfare status of AFDC teens.

Thank you.

Senator MOYNIHAN. We thank you, Dr. Quinn, for a very carefully put together testimony, for your references, and for your hand-over to Mr. Pawasarat.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Quinn appears in the appendix.]

STATEMENT OF JOHN M. PAWASARAT, DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE, MILWAUKEE, WI

Mr. PAWASARAT. Good morning, Senator Moynihan, Senator Kohl. Thank you for requesting us to come and testify. My comments, so that they do not seem the same as Lois's are examples of

how the working of the system affect the conduct of the evaluation staff and looking at the experiment. It may be instructive in looking at some of the evaluation questions for the 6 to 12-year-old population as well.

While the Learnfare policy is very easy to understand it is quite complex to administer and requires the cooperation of 429 locally autonomous school districts, 72 county income maintenance departments and the State Department of Health and Social Services. While the State of Wisconsin has one of the most sophisticated computer systems in the Nation for tracking welfare payments and the welfare population, implementation of the policy is dependent not only on computer matches, but decisions of thousands of income maintenance workers and teachers across the State and accurate reporting of this data to the various computerized systems involved in implementation.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services maintains a computerized file of all AFDC recipients in the State which is available to summarize administrative data and teens under Learnfare policy. This data is very limited in nature and is flawed by inaccuracies that preclude its use as outcome data. Reliable data on school achievement, school completion, will only be possible after review of actual school records which are scheduled to begin in Milwaukee and the five other school districts during 1991.

Our first report summarized the State's computerized welfare records on the Learnfare status of AFDC teens in Milwaukee County as of December 1989. However, this data does not provide information necessary to measure the outcomes of Learnfare. It can only be used to define the population to be studied and to track the status of participants for AFDC check-writing purposes.

We have summarized in the report that you have in front of you the numbers on the teen-parent population and the dependent population. As noted there—and I want to use the teen pregnancy population as an example—nearly half of the teen parents who have not graduated from high school—and in Milwaukee County that is 907 individuals—are exempted from school under Learnfare requirements, although the reasons for most exemptions are not available in the State data system.

According to caseworkers—these are income maintenance case workers—a large number of teen parents are exempted from school by obtaining a waiver from their high school stating they cannot graduate by age 20. In December 415 teen parents who had not completed high school were exempted from high school attendance and then subsequently exempted from Workfare because their children were under age 2; 144 teen parents were exempted from high school attendance and then subsequently exempted from Workfare because they were pregnant; and then subsequently, 116 non-graduates exempted from high school attendance had been placed in mandatory work programs, including 17 teens sanctioned that month under Workfare. Another 106 teen parents were temporarily out of school with infants under 3 months of age.

By contrast, relatively few dependent teens are exempt from school, in part because 18-year-old dependents are eligible for AFDC in Wisconsin only if they are in-school and are expected graduate or earn a GED credential by age 19.

The State's administrative records of school status of Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare between September 1988 and December 1989, the period Learnfare was fully implemented, that we studied, were reported for 2 months after the teen's last sanction. The State data showed that 28 percent of the teens had returned to school and were reported regularly attending 2 months after their last sanction. This group included 319 teen parents, which is 20 percent of all the teen parents sanctioned; 1,520 dependent teens, 30 percent of all sanctioned teens in the county.

These numbers have generated a great deal of controversy in Wisconsin, in large part because they conflict with earlier State reports that "the vast majority of teens are sanctioned for only a few months before returning to school and attending regularly." It has become an unfortunate new Wisconsin pastime to search for a single number that captures the experience of AFDC teens under the Learnfare policy. Some Learnfare critics have cited the 28—

Senator MOYNIHAN. Could we ask just a moment here—the earlier discussion sort of gave you the sense of a welfare parent who had children who were in their teens and going or not going to school. You have moved the discussion, very sensibly, to welfare parents who are themselves in their teens and may or may not be going to school. Now is there a discontinuity here or do I miss it?

Mr. PAWASARAT. Well the JOBS legislation, as you are aware, is targeted to teen parents.

Senator MOYNIHAN. That is right, yes.

Mr. PAWASARAT. Who become parents as teenagers and have no labor market experience and do not complete high school.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Right. That is exactly right.

Mr. PAWASARAT. So that is one subpopulation in Wisconsin's Learnfare initiative. The other population are dependents who are teenage parents themselves.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Right. Do you want to give me an apportionment, how many would be—half and half?

Mr. PAWASARAT. In the report I have the exact numbers.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Oh, good.

Mr. PAWASARAT. For the county of Milwaukee—

Senator MOYNIHAN. Sure.

Mr. PAWASARAT [continuing]. The total number of teen parents are 2,625; the number of dependents living with parents, 11,672.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Yes. Help me again; I am slow. Of the—

Mr. PAWASARAT. In the Learnfare Program in Milwaukee County for the teen parent population in the Learnfare Program that we studied included 2,625; the dependent non-teen parent population is 11,672.

Senator MOYNIHAN. So it is about 20 percent or something like that—18 to 20 percent?

But I guess I would assume that we are—the Learnfare is directed primarily to children of welfare recipients rather than the welfare recipients themselves.

Mr. PAWASARAT. Well it is just that the children have children.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Well I Know that.

Mr. PAWASARAT. No, so it is two populations, again, within the teen parent population—one are teen parents who have become case heads, who used to be dependents, had their own child, had a

parent on welfare that was the case head, and then moved into their own case and became a case head and no longer the parent. So that teen parent population includes both case heads who are 18 and 19-years-old and teenagers who are still living with their parents as dependents.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Right.

Mr. PAWASARAT. I have a few more.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Please, go right ahead.

Mr. PAWASARAT. Some Learnfare critics have used our 28-percent figure as evidence of Learnfare's failure. State officials recently calculated a new percentage of sanctioned teens returning to school based on these numbers—39.4 percent—by excluding those teens that leave AFDC after sanctioning. An even more favorable percentage—46 percent—could be generated if all sanctioned teens subsequently exempted from school attendance could somehow also be removed from the Learnfare experimental group.

We believe that reliance on 1 or 2 percentages to judge the complex experience of Learnfare is ill advised. First, we have yet to generate the base line data on the historical school experience—that is, completion rates, credits earned, and actual attendance records—of AFDC teens prior to the Learnfare experience.

Secondly, AFDC school status codes have serious limitations with practices reportedly varying even within counties for collecting and quoting school enrollment and attendance. Finally, just as the experiences of adults on AFDC have ranged from long-term dependence of 5 or more years on AFDC to short-term participation during bouts of unemployment, the subpopulations used for hypotheses testing in Learnfare will require careful attention and analysis.

To date, a larger number of sanctioned teens in Milwaukee County have left AFDC than have remained on aid while returning to school. Recent patterns of movement on and off welfare will be compared to the pre-Learnfare period controlling for changes in the labor market to determine if the Learnfare experiment has affected the movement of families or individual youth off welfare. In the case of teen parents, social service records will also be used, where available, to determine the numbers, if any, of these teens' infants who remained on aid or moved into foster care with another case head or in another household.

The strength of our research design is its use of non-welfare data sources for labor market participation, school completion, and birth rates, insuring that the experiences of all teens in the experimental group, including those who leave aid, will be evaluated.

The Wisconsin Learnfare experiment addresses the national goal of breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence through education and along with the Work Experience and Job Training Program and Community Work Experience Program through employment training. These outcomes cannot be measured quickly, but are essential for understanding the impact and value of the Learnfare policy experiment.

As we proceed, we welcome the recommendations and insights of this committee and the State and Federal departments in our evaluation work.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pawasarat appears in the appendix.]

Senator MOYNIHAN. We thank you all for very careful, thoughtful analyses. I mean, the idea that there is to be something seriously learned about the experience of children and education that can be learned inside of 20 years is something I think we gave up on awhile ago. We learned what we could learn by cohort analysis in the 1960's; and after that the only real learning beyond what we know is going to be done by longitudinal studies and the statistics show that it takes someone 21 years for someone to turn 21. It looks longer, 21 years 9 months—maybe you might want to put it that way.

I would just simply say to Dr. Corbett that I would hope your colleagues back at the university in Madison which is a nice place to live would not smile when you talk about people changing. Okay? It is easy to be derisory of that. It is just as easy to say that, you know, there is an exact correlation from the day we established the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin poverty began to increase. And, therefore, it can be shown that the more research we do on poverty, the more poverty we get. Statistics prove that.

Dr. CORBETT. That is the conclusion I came to, Senator.

Senator MOYNIHAN. I gather that.

I think you are quite right to describe a change in attitudes in the early 1970's, late 1960's, about entitlements to income strategies and the dismissal of this Victorian scientific charity, the censorious and judgmental people changing; and we had a very interesting thing, we got rid of all that and we moved towards an income strategy—in the course of which we cut the income provided children by a third. Starve them so if they do not grow up then they do not have any problems as adults.

The abject failure of that policy has driven its advocates out of this hearing room, sir. We went through all the hearings—2 long years—on the Family Support Act, and we never saw one of them. They were not here. The so-called advocate groups, that advocated merely income strategies, could not be found.

The other thing to say, but please interrupt. No, no. I mean, speak.

Dr. CORBETT. I do not speak of the people changing business derivatively. In fact, my interpretation of history is that when the economists took over the poverty business in the late 1960's, early 1970's—that is when the income definition came in.

Senator MOYNIHAN. At the University of Wisconsin.

Dr. CORBETT. Some of us noneconomists have held out, however. In fact, it did push the people changing business sort of to the side. I think it probably is the way to go, but it is just a very difficult business. That is the point I wanted to make. The war on poverty, the first front on the war on poverty, was a "hand up," it was people changing. The second front was the income strategy and that took over as the first front—

Senator MOYNIHAN. And when it took over it instantly lost support.

Dr. CORBETT. Yes.

Senator MOYNIHAN. It is remarkable that in Wisconsin, which is after all a very special place, you have only cut AFDC payments by what is it 14 percent?

Dr. CORBETT. Fourteen percent. But it is clear that it is a program that we are strangling slowly. You know, it is a program that is cheap relative to the other strategies of really trying to reach these disadvantaged kids and we have allowed the real value of benefits to decline.

Senator MOYNIHAN. But note that the "advocates" would rather see the program slowly strangled than even consider the thought that you might want to change behavior.

Let me make another point and see if you do not agree. If you do not, say so. It is a free country, you know, and this is an open hearing, and Dr. Quinn, Mr. Pawasarat. It is the particular emphasis of the legislation we adopted 2 years ago, which will be the only legislation adopted in the rest of this century, incidentally. If anybody thinks otherwise does not work in the U.S. Senate and is not a member thereof, certainly.

We were addressing ourselves to the situation, primarily, of very young parents, male and female, young in a manner that had really not much societal experience, a decline in the age of menarche, which is now down to about 11.5 years—the lowest in biological history of the species. I guess it is diet. It cannot be that Canadian wind. So you have this phenomenon of children having children. And when you begin to address yourself to their behavior, you are not in the people changing business you are in the adult formation business. Children need to be taught that before they are adults they are children. It is one of the most well established principle of the species that you have to raise your children.

When you have your children with children, and such, you are reforming them, you are trying to the contrary to do what parents do and it goes on forever as we all know. It is perfectly legitimate to say we will start thinking about the condition of a 16-year-old mother, a 17-year-old mother, an 18-year-old mother, is not into the people changing business; it is into the child rearing business; and a subject which in my view is deserving in respect. I think we all know it is not easy and yet the species does go on.

Senator Kohl?

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Senator Moynihan.

Dr. Corbett, would you address for a moment what you think some of the underlying assumptions were regarding welfare dependency and the extent to which those assumptions are accurate? I am talking in particular about perceptions in the State and perhaps nationwide that the vast majority of welfare recipients are career dependents that is alluded to in testimony. There is another perception that scores of welfare dependents are flocking to Wisconsin to talk advantage of higher benefits.

In your opinion, Dr. Corbett, are these perceptions accurate; and if they are not, could you more accurately describe the population of Wisconsin?

Dr. CORBETT. Those are big questions. I think there are probably two ideological perspectives out there, a hard and soft. The hard perspective on reform I think comes out of a perception that most of the poor belong within the underclass, that the long-term poor

are chronic dependents. We know from these longitudinal studies that have been now coming forth and from the quarter a century of poverty research that we have been doing that the poor are a very diverse population.

To just get a handle on this, if you looked at the welfare population at any point in time you would probably find 60 to 70 percent were or would become long-term recipients. That seems like a lot. But if you look at the cohorts, new cohorts, coming on to welfare you would find that about half would leave the roles within 2 years. Some of them would come back on. That is because the flow through is different from a static point-in-time look.

If you try to take——

Senator MOYNIHAN. Those are precisely the data, those are the bedrock data, on which the Family Support Act is based.

Dr. CORBETT. It is a very diverse population.

Senator MOYNIHAN. We say pay attention to the long term which is proportionately large at any given moment; small over time but obviously is the problem.

Dr. CORBETT. That is right.

Now if you assume that all people on welfare are long-term welfare dependents then you might make the assumption in fact that there is some kind of motivational deficiency, poor parenting, or whatever, that leads to this long-term dependence and take one step further back that it is a lack of ambition and motivation, something generically wrong with the person and they need to be sort of negatively motivated.

I think that that probably characterizes some of those chronic dependents. Exactly what proportion, I do not know. But I think that the initial program assumed the great proportion of the welfare population was like that. The other side, the soft side, is equally a truncated vision, believing that all the poor and all the dependents are exactly like the middle class, except they do not have enough money and they lack opportunity. I think that is also biased or a misperception.

I think they are both out there. We need different reforms for different segments of this diverse population. It was a very big question you asked.

Oh, and the migration issue. Did you still want me to respond to that?

Senator KOHL. I said that there is another perception that all kinds of welfare people come to Wisconsin because our benefits are perceived to be high. Do you find anything to that?

Dr. CORBETT. Well there is a welfare magnet phenomenon. I think, though, that the bulk of the literature says it is relatively small, that it creeps over time. The sensational headlines, from a study done last year, that it is going to cost the State of Wisconsin \$129 million a year because of people coming into the State to collect higher welfare benefits are irresponsible. We looked at it. There were incredible assumptions in there, that it cost \$15 million, for example, in additional case workers to deal with this bigger caseload. Well during that period of time the caseload had declined by about 10 percent or more, so the case load was going down.

So if all these people were coming into the State of Wisconsin to take advantage of the higher benefits, why was the caseload going down? The only way to explain that is that the native population on AFDC was leaving at a tremendous rate. So all you have to do is look at the stock, the proportion of out-of-state migrants in the stock of welfare, and that did not change over time.

That seems to suggest that if there are people coming in, and about the same proportion of people over time are moving to Wisconsin from another State, it is a natural phenomenon. People move all the time. And if you look at, in fact, the proportion of people of—look at any new applicant system—people going for driver's licenses, people who are applying for loans—you find a certain proportion live in another State.

I think there is a welfare magnet phenomenon. I do not think it is a crisis, though.

Senator KOHL. Okay. So you do not consider it to be something which is highly significant, very costly?

Dr. CORBETT. It is not very costly. Well, no, I do not think it is—if people are moving to Wisconsin, the welfare part of it from our surveys, play a minor role.

Senator KOHL. Okay.

Dr. CORBETT. They are moving for quality of life, better schools or whatever. I think that is the predominant reason.

Senator KOHL. Dr. Quinn and Mr. Pawasarat, let me say first that your preliminary report has had a significant impact on the discussion of Learnfare and I believe on the course of the program in general. I think you are both to be commended for that.

Prior to the new waiver authority, were you able to examine the availability of social services, other than day care and transportation; and which services will you be tracking now?

Mr. PAWASARAT. One of the problems—and Lois started looking at it—is that the State does not keep records on transportation and day care provided to the participants, so it will be particularly difficult to retrieve that data if at all possible because each of the 72 counties keeps that data in whatever form they have. Almost all of them do not have computers. So it will be a difficult and time-consuming task, if at all possible, to even control for the services provided.

Dr. QUINN. The one area where we do hope to get data—we do not have it now—but JOB service has compiled information on all the clients that they have provided contracts to for alternative schools and education. And so we expect to control for that in part and also since we are tracking all teens in Milwaukee County we will certainly be tracking those specific teens to see what their success is in staying in school, completing and then successfully entering the labor market.

Senator KOHL. Okay. Do you think that there is yet any reliable data on which to accurately assess the adequacy of existing school and county social service staff?

Mr. PAWASARAT. I think the problem with the welfare system and the social services provided along with it is that at least in Milwaukee County, much of the system is statutorily driven. The county is required to investigate reports of abuse and neglect within, I think, 24 hours. So much of the so-called service is not

really service at all, but it is simply an investigation, someone walking into the family setting to see if abuse and neglect is occurring. It does not mean that family ever receives what you would imagine to be a service—counseling, some sort of intervention. So one thing that is very difficult is to—and there is no recordkeeping system—track who gets what service for how long.

Senator KOHL. Okay. And finally, with regard to the exempt populations and not factoring in those teens who leave AFDC after sanctioning, would you explain to the committee why, in your opinion, the consideration of those groups is important.

Dr. QUINN. Well I think, you know, we have talked before about who are welfare recipients. We know that a number of welfare recipients do not stay on aid long term and that there is a lot of movement in and out. What we do not know now, but we will know when we are given the historical data on AFDC patterns in the State prior to Learnfare is what has been the typical movement of teen parents, for example, on and off aid. We are seeing quite a bit of movement off aid of sanctioned parents, but we do not know, is this part of a typical pattern that preceded Learnfare where teenagers would be on aid for awhile and then find other means of support and possibly come back later.

And until we establish those patterns we do not have the bench line data, but it also raises serious questions of are there other consequences of Learnfare and is—you know, are teen parents leaving aid because of the sanctioning, then what are the long-term consequences of that for the—

Senator MOYNIHAN. By aid you mean AFDC?

Dr. QUINN. AFDC entirely.

Then what are the long-term consequences. So that population is part of the experimental group. They have obviously been touched by the experiment, but we are seeking guidance from, you know, obviously from this committee as well as from the State and Federal Government to ensure that we identify appropriate subpopulations to look at in more detail, but we cannot exclude them.

And finally, I think a strength of our design because we are going into the schools to look at school data not only for the AFDC teens, but to get to your question raised earlier, Senator Moynihan, looking at non-AFDC teens as well to see what the patterns of attendance and credit attainment and completion are. There is no reason to exclude those teens who left aid. Right now many people in the State are not talking about them because no one can say definitively whether they are in school or out of school. Well for those who stay in the State and particularly for those who stay in the city we will be able to tell—are they in school, whether they are on aid or not, and that is an important part of the population.

Senator KOHL. Well thank you very much, all three of you. Your testimony and all the work you have done has been very, very important and has helped us quite a bit.

Dr. CORBETT. May I just amend an answer I gave before. I do think—I was speaking in a statewide way about the immigration phenomenon. I do think there may be some difficulty with the city of Milwaukee. Because our survey results show that the people moving in there might be more likely to be welfare motivated; and also the caseload drop in the city or the county of Milwaukee has

been much slower since 1986 than the rest of the State. I just wanted to make that clear.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Sure.

Thank you all for a very factual, very informative testimony. Good luck on your work. Thank you for coming.

The chairman declares a 20 second recess while he stands up and stretches his knees. Now I call our final panel. Carol Croce—I hope I have that pronounced correctly—and Mr. Mark Rogacki. We welcome you both. Ms. Croce, you are first in the line up and we will hear from you first.

Ms. CROCE. Great. Thanks very much.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Your testimony will be put in the record as if read. You proceed exactly as you wish.

**STATEMENT OF CAROL L. CROCE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
WISCONSIN NUTRITION PROJECT, MADISON, WI**

Ms. CROCE. Thank you. First, I would like to thank both Senator Moynihan and Senator Kohl for the opportunity to be here. After what you heard this morning from the State you may be wondering why anybody could possibly be opposed to the Learnfare Program.

Senator, while the intent of the State may not have been to harm families, the reality is that Learnfare has; and under the new terms of the expansion it may well continue to harm very vulnerable families. I think that Learnfare is a misnomer. It is not about learning and it isn't fair. It singles out one group of truant children—teenagers in AFDC households—who are held to a more stringent attendance requirement than is required by State truancy laws. It exacerbates family situations already strained by poverty and the pressures of single parenting. It punishes entire families for the truant actions of a single child and imposes severe financial hardship on entire families.

It has had a perverse and destructive effect on family structure by giving teens unwarranted control over the family's income. And still, we do not know why these teens are absent from school.

The touted success of Learnfare is yet to be substantiated by its own data. There is no evidence that the truancy levels among AFDC teens has gone down due to Learnfare, nor does it appear that the sanctions have had the desired deterrent effect. But what we do know is that Learnfare sanctions have hurt families. It has been especially troubling to us when we know that 41 percent of the children who have been sanctioned have been identified as living in severely dysfunctional families and that the State has deliberately put them at further risk for abuse and neglect for the sake of social policy experimentation.

It is this detrimental effect of Learnfare on families that I want to speak to today. First, there is the financial impact of the lost benefits. The loss of between 15 and 44 percent of a family's monthly cash income forces families to make hard choices about basic needs—how their rent will be paid, how the heat will stay on, and how food will remain on the table.

Benefit reductions have resulted in extreme hardship for some Learnfare families. In one case, a client with two sanctioned teen-

agers in Milwaukee lost benefits for both of them for 3 months. During the third month she was evicted for nonpayment of rent and they moved to a homeless shelter. Later at a fair hearing the county admitted that the sanction had been made in error.

Second, it undermines family discipline. Teens use their school attendance as leverage to get privileges such as staying out late, purchasing expensive items, and it gives the teen an unhealthy control over the family's purse strings. It weakens a parent's authority within that family structure.

Third, sanctioning a truant teen is de facto sanctioning of the other children in that AFDC household. When the lost benefits result in an eviction or a utility shutoff or less food at mealtimes, it punishes the siblings for the actions of the teen family member over whom they have no control.

It is not that I am against holding kids accountable for their actions, but cutting benefits from parents and children punishes the wrong people. Which gets to my next point, that the sanction is directed at the parent, not at the truant child. If social policy is committed to punishing a teen for noncompliant behavior, then the sanction should be removing some type of tangible commodity that that child possesses, that they have control over.

For example, there have been some States that have been experimenting with truancy prevention programs by revoking the driver's licenses of teens that have dropped out of school.

Senator MOYNIHAN. West Virginia, I think.

Ms. CROCE. Yes, I believe you are right.

But that sanctioning approach directly affects that teen population.

Last, the sanctions are based on unrealistic expectations about teenage maturity and behavior. The assumption underlining Learnfare is that kids as young as 13 have the maturity to understand the long-term consequences of their actions when they skip class and the relative importance of their being in class compared to other factors that may be going on in their lives.

As was cited earlier, the fact that 41 percent of the sanctioned kids in Milwaukee come from families that we know have been through the Children's Court system or have been charged with child abuse or neglect reflects that sad truth. In general, 18 years of age serves as a benchmark for individual responsibility. It is the age for voting, when you can serve in the Armed Services, to be able to drink. But only in Wisconsin do we demand that AFDC children, as young as 13 years—we are talking about 7th and 8th graders—have the maturity to make appropriate decisions about their future educational needs. And without access and referral to the necessary services, the State expects them to make those judgments on their own.

So what we have is sanctions with little or no services. Secretary Goodrich earlier today acknowledged that kids are not getting the services based on information from a new legislative audit survey. That is the kind of information that has been coming out of community groups for the last year. And while Secretary Goodrich acknowledges, as well, that services like mental health and drug abuse counseling are in short supply for everyone, it is only Learn-

fare families who have their incomes cut when they cannot get the services that they need.

What we believe is that sanctions are unnecessary in order to provide the services that teens need to get back onto the right track in succeeding at and completing their education. When a kid is truant, you need to assess why that child is skipping classes or has dropped out and determine what it is they need to correct the behavior. In the example that was given earlier this morning about the child in Jamesville, it was found he had drug abuse problems which were causing him to have the attendance problem. That same child could and should have been identified through missing school and should have his drug problem addressed with services. But the sanctions did not need to be in place in order to deliver that service.

You have different groups of kids that have different needs. You might have some kids who need a minimal amount of services. Maybe it is a teen mother. All she needs is the day care to get back to school. Or it could be a kid who needs some additional tutoring to get his reading level back up to grade level so that he does not feel behind with his classmates. Other kids are going to need more services and help—ranging from drug and alcohol abuse therapy, maybe to alternative education programs outside of the school system. But at both levels it is the services and it is the interventions that get that child back into the system. Cutting the family's welfare benefit is not the catalyst.

For some kids all the services and the best efforts of the parent, the school, and the welfare system are not going to be enough to get him back into school. At that point, what is to be gained from sanctioning this family? It only serves to pose a financial hardship on other siblings over actions that they cannot control.

In cases like this it is appropriate to bring other systems to bear that are already in the community, that deal with incorrigible children. For example, you can look to the juvenile court system. There is something called "Child in Need of Protective Service Petitions" that can be filed. Turn the job over to the professionals that are already there and trained to deal with difficult kids to do that job. You do not need to put into place another bureaucracy.

In conclusion, we continue to believe that a program that uses sanctions without any assurances that services will be provided will not have the desired effect of getting truant teens back into school.

I appreciate this opportunity and would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator MOYNIHAN. We thank you, Ms. Croce.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Croce appears in the appendix.]

Senator MOYNIHAN. And as is our pattern we will hear now from you Mr. Rogacki; and then we will take questions.

**STATEMENT OF MARK M. ROGACKI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION, MADISON, WI**

Mr. ROGACKI. Good afternoon, Senator Moynihan and Senator Kohl.

Senator MOYNIHAN. Yes, it is afternoon. I have to note that.

Mr. ROGACKI. I had "morning" originally [in my notes]. But, I have enjoyed listening to the hearing and I have learned a lot from the other speakers.

I want to thank you very much for this opportunity to be here today. I am the executive director of the Wisconsin Counties Association. This association was created by Wisconsin statute in 1935 to protect county interests and further better county government. The WCA is a voluntary organization of county governments representing over 1900 county board supervisors and executives. Currently, 69 of Wisconsin's 72 counties are members. The association is governed by a 15-member board of directors, which represents some of Wisconsin's largest counties—Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, and Kenosha—and some of its smallest counties—Ashland, Forest, Jackson, and Price.

The role of the Wisconsin Counties Association is to provide a voice on both State and Federal issues of concern to county government. In Wisconsin, we have a staff of six licensed lobbyists. In Washington, we are represented by Waterman and Associates.

I am here today to speak on behalf of county-elected officials, or the policymakers, in county government. In Wisconsin, county government is responsible for administering Federal income maintenance programs, including aid to families with dependent children. Wisconsin county officials have witnessed the transformation of "temporary" welfare programs, created during the New Deal, into "permanent" welfare programs. AFDC is one such program.

During our 55-year history we have watched families turn to AFDC for short-term support and have seen that support turn to dependence. We are now faced with the economic and societal problems caused by welfare dependency.

We know that single-parent households, primarily headed by women, rely on public assistance for support; and that the public assistance programs often provide economic disincentives to self-sufficiency.

We have experienced more and more third, fourth, and even fifth, generation AFDC families.

We have a tremendous problem with teen pregnancy, which often results in high school dropouts and more AFDC dependency.

It appears that we have created a welfare system which teaches our children, by example, that relying on public assistance is an acceptable career. We have shown our children that an education is not necessary. We have established a public support system that encourages dependency and discourages self-sufficiency. It appears that sometimes we are better at teaching them to be welfare dependent than we are at teaching them to improve their skills and marketability.

Since counties administer welfare programs, Wisconsin County officials have long realized that there are problems. We know that Wisconsin's welfare programs fail to assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient. When we have seen generation after generation of the same family living on AFDC, we know that we have collectively failed.

In the early 1980's, our problems were compounded by the high level of benefits in our State—at one time we provided the third highest AFDC benefits in the Nation. With our benefits higher

than those of our neighboring states, we experienced an influx of welfare dependents from those States, especially from Illinois. So, not only were we dealing with welfare problems among Wisconsinites, we were inheriting welfare problems from other States.

During the mid-1980's, Wisconsin debated welfare issues including benefit levels, disincentives to work, extended medical coverage for welfare recipients who get jobs, mandatory work programs and mandatory school programs. With the election of Governor Thompson in 1986, Wisconsin began to address these issues.

We received waivers from the Federal Government that allowed Wisconsin to implement education and training programs for adults and the Learnfare Program for teenagers. It is our belief that these programs are integral in any effort to break the welfare dependency cycle. We are working toward a welfare program that meets the original goals of the Social Security Act of 1935, that is: a program that provides temporary assistance to the needy, but helps them to help themselves.

Wisconsin's welfare program, under the leadership of Governor Thompson, operates on the assumption that each individual is responsible for achieving self-sufficiency. To stem the influx of welfare recipients from other States, the AFDC benefit level was reduced; the savings were used to finance new education and training initiatives in Wisconsin's welfare programs. We now have a program that not only provides the welfare recipient's daily needs, but also provides them with an opportunity to gain the skills necessary for self-sufficiency. It is a program that invests in our children and in our future.

One of the major components of Wisconsin's welfare program is Learnfare. County officials have long discussed the problem of high school dropouts and the increasing number of school-aged welfare recipients. We knew that these children did not receive the skills necessary, either in their education or daily living, to become contributing members of society. We knew that we would have to find a way to keep all of our children in school if we were ever to break this cycle of welfare dependency.

The primary objective of the Learnfare Program is to help teenagers receive their high school diplomas by requiring school attendance as a condition of receiving AFDC benefits. With a high school diploma, these teenagers will have access to better jobs which will reduce the demand for expanded welfare programs. Learnfare is also designed to increase parental involvement in their children's education and contact between parents and schools.

Counties have also used this program to identify children and families in need of services. In Milwaukee, Rock, and Racine Counties, a county employees work with the Learnfare teens to identify any social problems that may contribute to their failure to attend school. These same county employees determine whether the Learnfare teen needs alternative education, day care or transportation services and helps locate these services. In addition, these county employees visit the homes and use these visits to assist other family members in need of services. Counties have used this technique to develop special programs designed to meet the needs of those people who are having problems.

Racine County, for example, has implemented an intensive juvenile counseling program as a result of the Learnfare Program. This program, designed for adjudicated use, includes intensive counseling and monitoring, coordinated between the courts and probation department. Through Learnfare the State also provides funds for transportation and childcare, to provide teenaged mothers and other Learnfare participants with a greater opportunity to attend school and receive their diplomas. We believe Learnfare and the education of all our children is an important component in reducing poverty.

Governor Thompson, as you know, has recently proposed to expand the Learnfare Program. While the current Learnfare Program requires school-aged children to attend school, the expanded program would include children between the ages of 6 and 12. We have found, and we believe, that children's habits are developed well before the teenage years. It is our hope that pre-teen Learnfare will result in better habits, including study skills and school attendance habits.

Recently the Federal Government has announced its approval of the waivers necessary to expand Learnfare. The expanded Learnfare Program will be considered by the Wisconsin Legislature in early 1992. In an article published by the New York Association of Counties in 1987, Senator, you said, and correctly pointed out, that our welfare system has failed our children. You wrote, "They are given short weight, and it will show—as a group, though some will be lucky—throughout their lives. in school, after school, at work, at raising families of their own. To know this and not do something about it is to say we don't care."

Senator, you were right. You were right then and you are right today. We must do something about our children on welfare. In Wisconsin we believe that Learnfare is part of that answer. Through the leadership of Governor Thompson and the interest of Senators such as yourself, Senator Moynihan, and other Members of Congress, we believe we will find the way to break the cycle of welfare dependency. County officials in Wisconsin are ready to join with the Federal and State governments in this endeavor and in the interest of our children.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rogacki appears in the appendix.]

Senator MOYNIHAN. We thank both of you. There is one thing to say about Wisconsin, you know who each other is and you know those families out there.

Ms. Croce, you gave us six very poignant cases that I am sure Dr. Goodrich will care about.

You, sir, are exactly a tonic for this tired committee. A group of county officials, that is where the rubber meets the road in these things, who will do these things. Energy in a county executive, you cannot have a better formula for good government.

Mr. ROGACKI. Thank you.

Senator MOYNIHAN. I want to be clear that this hearing was held because Senator Kohl asked for it. Senator Kohl has been concerned about what is being done, what is being learned; and he has listened. You have heard him this morning. I want to thank him

and suggest perhaps for him to conclude our hearing with your fellow Wisconsin witnesses.

Senator KOHL. Thank you. Thank you, Senator Moynihan.

While we appreciate your very much being here, Ms. Croce, Mr. Rogacki, you add a lot to the hearing with your testimony. I would like to ask just a couple questions.

First, Mark, you are and have been a clear supporter of Learnfare. Most everyone here today, including the administration and Secretary Goodrich has lent their support to the need for increased case management and also services. Am I correct that the county Association recently opposed such action in the last legislative session?

Mr. ROGACKI. We opposed case management—unfunded case management—as part of an entire rewrite of a program in the State of Wisconsin, dealing with health and social services called “Community Aids.” We did not oppose financing case management. We do not believe that it ought to be financed under property tax. It ought to be financed by State and Federal sources. That was the basis of our opposition.

I would like, in clarification to a question which was raised earlier about a Milwaukee County situation, to just indicate that when I left Wisconsin last week it was my impression that the county board had not turned down the case management money and I confirmed that again this morning. They have not turned down the \$750,000. They have laid the matter aside in an effort to get more information. The basis of their concern is that they do not believe that \$750,000 is enough money to fully complete their obligations with the State of Wisconsin. They are simply asking for an assurance that, if they move toward the \$750,000 and they find that it is insufficient, the State will support an effort to increase the resources to provide that service.

Senator KOHL. Sure. I think that is accurate.

Mark, if for some reason a particular county refuses to provide the case management and services required under the new agreement, in your opinion should that county continue to impose sanctions if services are not available?

Mr. ROGACKI. Well I think that the counties ought to abide by the terms of the contract, the State law, and the elements of the program, Senator. I would think that if counties, for some reason, object to providing a provision of the program that has to be worked out between the State and the county government so that every citizen in the State receives exactly the same kind of services that are available. Then we have some continuity and a solid program.

So I would not be in support of counties picking and choosing elements of the program. I would be in support of a comprehensive program. And that where such disagreements occur between the State and the counties, I believe they have to be resolved before the program can be implemented in total.

Senator KOHL. Carol, you sat through this whole hearing this morning and we know where you stand and have high respect and regard for where you stand with respect to Learnfare. You know that Learnfare has received an extension and it is going to move forward whether or not you would wish it, or I would wish it, or

anybody would wish it, that is not the question. We are dealing with a fate decompili.

You have heard about everybody's concerns. You have heard about the plans, the hopes to evolve Learnfare into something different from what it perhaps was at its inception. In spite of your own feelings about Learnfare, which as I say I do respect, dealing with the realities with which we are now faced, do you have some enhanced feelings about its possibilities to do some good or at the very least not to be so oppressive?

Ms. CROCE. Let me say that I think we are pleased that the oversight that the Federal Government has had on that program has ensured that before the younger children get sanctioned and those families face the kinds of hardships I talked about, that they are going to be provided with the case management and the service plan that I talked about. What I still continue to be concerned about is, that there is no assurances in there for the 13 to 19-year-olds, the group of kids that we are seeing right now. There is no protection to them, they will not get the case management before the sanctions and there is no guarantee, from my reading of it, that they will get those services once the sanction takes place.

So on the one hand, while I think we are making some good movement in providing those needed services that I think we have all identified as being necessary, I still have a concern for the older children.

Senator KOHL. Okay. I think I do too. It is encouraging to hear Pat Goodrich, as well as Ms. Barnhart, say here this morning that although it is not mandated that services be provided for 13 to 19-year-olds, I think we have heard both of them say, particularly Pat, that she very much wants to see those services provided; and that if she could press a button, she would press a button to have those services provided.

I think that does offer us some considerable encouragement with respect to the direction in which they wish to go and the monitoring that we can bring to bear as the program unfolds in the years ahead.

Would you hope that that might be true?

Ms. CROCE. Yes, I would. Again, we still come back to the sanction issue and that is the part that has always been, I think, the sticking point. The folks that have been critical of this program have never disagreed that children need an education. Poor children need it more than anybody else. But the question has been, what do you have to do to get him or her back into school. It has always been a question about services.

I believe it was Professor Corbett who said earlier, there are no silver bullets. We get back to the issue of, you can pay for it in the short term. You need to provide those services to get those kids back on track. Because a lot of this program, I feel, is more of a body count. It is getting a person into a seat that really does not deal with why those kids are missing school in the first place and what is it going to take to get them back. And without that important component, I just do not see how the program can succeed.

Senator KOHL. Okay. Thank you both very much.

Senator Moynihan?

Senator MOYNIHAN. Thank you, Senator Kohl. We very much appreciate your interest. As I note once again, this is a first in my 14 years of the committee. This has never happened before and we now realize what we have missed—what we missed out in not having a whole morning of Wisconsinites. I just think we see a State that is trying to work, trying to define a social issue that baffles other places, trying to measure results, cares about them, and knows the people. That is something very special. That is why you have the reputation you do.

We thank you all and we particularly thank Secretary Goodrich for coming and Ms. Jackson for associating herself.

With that, having taken the issue under advisement and meaning to return to it in 2 or 3 years when we have some returns, I will close the hearing; and thanking our recorder most especially.

[Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at 12:28 p.m.]

A P P E N D I X

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JO ANNE B. BARNHART

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you today about the Learnfare program in Wisconsin. Wisconsin's Learnfare demonstration was implemented under our demonstration authority which allows States to test and evaluate important issues through waivers granted by the Department. As a result of findings from such demonstrations we are able to gain valuable information to assist us and you to improve the welfare system.

To understand where we are today with Learnfare, it is important to go back and review the history of this project. In 1987, the Department of Health and Human Services approved a major welfare reform initiative enacted by Governor Thompson and the Wisconsin State Legislature. Learnfare was one component of this initiative. Other features of the demonstration were designed to increase the number of recipients expected to participate in training and employment related activities, modify the earned income disregard, and provide 12-month transitional Medicaid and child care benefits.

The Learnfare demonstration was established as part of this larger initiative because of the link between students dropping out of school and longer receipt of AFDC. Wisconsin officials believe that requiring AFDC teens to remain in school will help break the cycle of poverty and prepare them for better jobs in the future. This is a central hypothesis being tested in the demonstration.

Under the originally approved Learnfare demonstration, all AFDC recipients aged 13 through 19 (including teen parents) have been required to attend school regularly unless they are otherwise exempt or have good cause for nonattendance. If a teen does not attend regularly, the family's monthly AFDC grant is reduced by the amount normally included for the teenager's needs for each month that they fail to comply.

Having taken under consideration the concerns expressed about the Learnfare demonstration and its potential expansion by the State to include younger children, we have recently issued new terms and conditions for approval of enhancements to the Learnfare demonstration which represent an appropriate balance between attendance requirements and services. The enhancements relate both to the teen population subject to Learnfare and to the design of the project for younger children.

The modified program for teens will continue to emphasize the important goal of education and the central responsibility of students and their families for school attendance. At the same time, the program will have an increased emphasis on case management and related services for teens with attendance problems which will, I believe, increase the program's potential to accomplish its goal.

Additional modifications to the Learnfare component stress prevention. By including families with children aged six through twelve, Wisconsin intends to focus on school attendance problems at their onset in the early grades. To alleviate the problem of poor school attendance, the State will provide intensive services that deal with the causes of excessive school absence in an attempt to improve the likelihood of better education and, ultimately, self-sufficiency for these youngsters.

There are two primary differences between the two Learnfare project components. The first is related to the timing of the case management intervention. For the teen population, following verification of absence information, case management will be offered concurrently with the imposition of a sanction for noncompliance with the attendance requirements. For families with younger children, case management will be offered at the point of verification of excessive absences. A sanction will only be

imposed if the family fails or refuses to comply with a mutually agreed upon plan of action to address problems related to the child's poor school attendance.

The second difference between the two components of Learnfare is the evaluation design. The evaluation of Learnfare on the teen population, which is currently underway, is based on a pre/post design. In addition, we will compare school attendance patterns of non-AFDC teens with AFDC teens before and after Learnfare. In contrast, the evaluation of Learnfare requirements on the younger children and their families will be based on a random assignment evaluation design. Such a design will allow for an even more rigorous evaluation of the net impacts of the policy on school attendance.

The State is committed to increasing case management services and minimizing waiting periods for services identified in family service plans. The Governor has designated a half million dollars each for case management and additional alternative educational services for Learnfare students in Milwaukee, for a total of \$1 million in new State spending. Both will be matched fifty/fifty with Federal dollars. Further, the terms and conditions agreed to by the State include a provision for monitoring and reporting on the length of time between referrals for services and receipt of services.

We believe these steps will enhance the project's potential for increasing school attendance. To further help ensure that sufficient services are available to meet the needs of Learnfare children and their families, we are authorizing up to \$10 million in Federal funds (including the \$1 million mentioned previously). These funds will be available to match State or county funding for services to Learnfare children and their families during the demonstration. These services may include family counseling, alternative educational services, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, mental health counseling, transportation, child abuse/neglect services, and others that may be needed.

As I mentioned previously, our agreement with the State includes some very positive provisions for evaluating the effectiveness of the expanded Learnfare project through a rigorous, random assignment research design. Further, Wisconsin has agreed to accelerate obtaining evaluation results of the current Learnfare system's effectiveness in promoting school attendance among teens. This will allow us to assess the effects of this policy sooner than originally planned.

Over the years, the Department and the Congress have learned much from state-initiated demonstrations which have tested and evaluated alternative policy options. Both president Bush and former president Reagan strongly endorsed local initiatives and state-Federal partnerships to develop and test innovative models to address the problems of welfare dependency. As you, Mr. Chairman, have so often asserted: the research results from state demonstrations, supported by both waivers and funding from the Federal government, played a central role in the enactment of the Family support Act of 1988. The Wisconsin Welfare Reform Demonstration with the Learnfare component is just one of many such state initiatives the Department has approved in the interest of providing states the flexibility needed to develop and demonstrate new solutions to serious problems.

The modifications which the State is making to the project will, as I have stated, provide an appropriate balance between responsibility on the part of the recipient and support from the state to assist recipients in fulfilling program requirements. I want to emphasize that the modifications were a result of consideration of information from the State's experience and the comments we received from members of Congress, interested organizations, and the public.

In conclusion, on behalf of the secretary, I thank the committee for its interest in welfare reform demonstrations. We look forward to obtaining useful findings from such initiatives. These findings will assist the Department, state agencies and you in developing programs which effectively address the needs of AFDC recipients and provide new methods to reduce dependency.

That concludes my remarks. I welcome your questions.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS J. CORBETT

LEARNFARE: A MYSTERY IN TREE ACTS

If the Wisconsin Learnfare experience were to be translated for the stage, it might move some audience members to great wonder, owing to the several mysteries surrounding its plot. The *first* mystery is how a concept that initially enjoyed public and political support could evolve into a program subject to acrimonious debate. The *second* mystery is how a dramatic policy initiative could proceed in a

fashion ensuring that very little could be learned. The *final* mystery concerns the denouement to come—how can we address the real needs of the disadvantaged children whose impoverished prospects afforded Learnfare its initial rationale?

Prologue. Learnfare draws upon the traditional manner of structuring public assistance for the poor. Until two decades ago, the provision of welfare typically was conditioned on the behavior of the recipient. A host of criteria were applied to determine whether beneficiaries of public largesse were “fit” to receive help. Ties to the local community were examined. Sexual practices were monitored. In some jurisdictions, school records were reviewed. Particularly in the 1960s, cash assistance was accompanied by intensive services (typically provided in a voluntary manner) designed to help dependent caretakers achieve self-sufficiency. This tradition, involving a client’s obligation to behave appropriately and the provider’s obligation to give nonfinancial help, predates the emergence of the modern welfare state, going back at least to the “Scientific Charity” movement of the late 19th century, perhaps even to the original Elizabethan Poor Laws. It should not be forgotten that the strategy of the War on Poverty was a “hand up,” not a “handout.”

The 1970s marked a period of aberration. An “income definition” of poverty emerged and the “entitlement” notion of administering welfare prevailed. Poor people differed from the rest of society only in their lack of enough money, and the solution was to correct the shortfall in a simple, standardized manner. Services were separated from cash assistance. Flat grants as opposed to individualized budgets were introduced. Client protections were strengthened. This transformation had several motives, some well-intentioned and others born of frustration. It was generally agreed that behavior-conditioned assistance was labor intensive and costly. It was also argued that services were ineffective and social workers intrusive and abusive. In any case, rising caseloads—a trend abetted by a series of court decisions and administrative rulings that facilitated the access to assistance for poor children—rendered moot any discussion of individualized treatment of the recipient family.

Learnfare—along with gradual strengthening of work-welfare programs as exemplified by the JOBS legislation—puts welfare back into the business of modifying behavior—“changing people.” The program also requires a forced, perhaps overdue, marriage of the education and the welfare systems. These aspects are a logical and predictable extension of a renewed emphasis on ill-defined but powerful images of an “underclass” and those suffering from what has been labeled “behavioral dependency.”

A major problem is that the debate over Learnfare has been truncated, focusing on only one version—the rather limited Wisconsin model (at least as originally introduced)—of what is a more fundamental shift in the way that welfare is conceptualized, designed, and administered. The real question is not whether Learnfare in Wisconsin “works.” As noted below, we lack credible numbers to make that judgment, nor is there a consistently applied definition of success. It is, however, feasible and appropriate to comment on the process through which Wisconsin and the nation are getting back into the complicated and costly business of changing people.

Act 1. As I have described elsewhere,¹ the process through which Learnfare in Wisconsin was introduced caused serious difficulties and strengthened negative perceptions of the initiative. The basic problem lay in failure to deal adequately with the successive tasks involved in enacting a program and with all the other dimensions intrinsic to sound public policy. For convenience, I summarize those dimensions under the (perhaps appropriate) acronym SADLIE: Sensing and Analyzing a social problem; Designing and Legitimizing a response; and Implementing and Evaluating an operational program.

Sensing/Analyzing the Problem. Learnfare was formulated in a crisis atmosphere. Amid vague perceptions of a growing problem, its development was put on a “fast track” schedule which, under the best of circumstances, would have resulted in difficulties. No serious analysis of the issue was performed. No baseline data were collected. No theoretical foundation was established prior to initiation of the program. Unsubstantiated impressions of an urgent problem took the place of planning. Assumptions were made concerning the availability of school and community-based services for at-risk students.

Designing/Legitimizing the Response. The steps involved in designing and legitimizing (enacting authorizing legislation) the Wisconsin model were interrelated. First, a legislative deal was struck to permit enactment of a modest initiative under which sanctions could be levied on teen parents receiving AFDC after services were provided to them. The governor then utilized his line-item veto powers to expand this program to dependent teens on AFDC and to remove the condition that services be available before a penalty was imposed. Perhaps to justify this unilateral action, the rhetoric surrounding Learnfare grew stronger—the imposition (or threat) of

sanctions would "restore the missing band of the father" and "break the cycle of poverty." The result was to increase the scope of the program, thus compounding implementation challenges, and to generate political distrust. The fundamental mistakes made were to assume that a concept is reed with its enactment into law and with failing to appreciate that programs really are created through a series of "adoptions" during the implementation process.

Implementing/Evaluating a Program. The "fast track" implementation schedule impaired the program's credibility and support. Since over school districts and 72 welfare agencies were involved, administrative disarray was inevitable. Elements essential to any new program—articulation of shared goals, development of consistent definitions, implementation of management supports (e.g., timely information transfers)—could not be introduced within the time allowed. Consequent variation in administrative practices resulted in apparent inequities in the treatment of families. It is not surprising that the Milwaukee Legal Services agency successfully contested about two-thirds of the cases it handled. Curiously, only perfunctory attention was paid by state and Federal officials to the evaluation requirement that is presumably a quid pro quo for granting a state's waiver request. In the absence of a rigorous evaluation, we are left with contradictory anecdotes and questionable outcome numbers.

This combination of planning omissions, design flaws, and implementation deficiencies has undermined what should have been an important social experiment. One is reminded of the earlier days of the War on Poverty, when hastily conceived and implemented initiatives foundered in light of the exaggerated claims made on their behalf and a widespread, though largely unmeasured, perception that these efforts had failed to achieve those claims.

Act 2. These hearings are an indication of the failure to gain substantive knowledge regarding the program's impacts. This failure is attributable in part to the malleable character of what the program is supposed to accomplish. Early on, the stated objective was to "break the cycle of poverty"—an ambitious goal, given the modest nature of the intervention. More recently, a frequently mentioned criterion is improved attendance—a necessary but hardly sufficient intervention to prepare disadvantaged youth for the demands of postindustrial society. Complicating evaluation is the multidimensionality of possible outcomes. Moving beyond simple normative positions (e.g., all sanctions are bad, or all recipients need to be motivated), one must be able to measure and comparatively assess a number of both positive and negative outcomes. For example, is improved attendance an entirely positive outcome, or are there some costs (e.g., teaching time lost) associated with compelling less motivated students to be in the classroom? Do sanctions uniformly motivate members of the target group to alter counterproductive behaviors, or do they make it more difficult to deal with personal and family problems? etc. Answering complex questions requires dispassionate thinking concerning what the program is about, an honest appraisal of its theoretical underpinnings, and a sober assessment of what might be expected on both positive and negative sides. Evaluating new social programs is not an either/or game—the program either "worked" or "failed." The evaluations of work-welfare programs done by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) suggested modest program impacts. Still, they were instrumental to the acceptance of the JOBS portion of the Family Support Act. Evaluations used in a summative sense seldom provide an incontrovertible verdict, nor should that be expected. But used in a formative sense they can instruct us about where problems lie and where adjustments should be made. No matter how plausible an idea may appear, we seldom get it right the first time around.

A tragedy of the early Wisconsin experience with Learnfare is the failure to ensure that causal attributions can be made about program effects. We are left with an acrimonious debate based on generalized impressions, illustrative anecdotes, and descriptive numbers. Impressions, anecdotes, and descriptive (i.e., outcome) numbers are instructive in many ways, but they do not enable us to relate changes in selected criterion variables to the specific intervention of interest.

Recent debate on the effectiveness of Learnfare borders on the humorous. The "success" rate, loosely defined as those sanctioned for three months or less, has been estimated at anywhere from 70 to percent, depending on which portion of the target population is examined and how the calculations are performed. The fact is that the 70 percent figure does not "prove" the program is working, nor does the 30 percent figure "prove" that it is not working. These outcome numbers are not the same as impact numbers, which are obtained by examining the difference between a group exposed to the intervention with a group not exposed to the intervention. Consider the following: the "success" rate for program X is 70 percent and the measured rate for a randomly assigned control group is percent, while the compara-

ble "success" rates for program Y are 30 and percent, respectively. *Ceteris paribus*, the more effective program is Y, despite its lower outcome numbers. Failure to make this simple distinction has confounded social policy analysis for years—particularly in the assessment of work-welfare reform initiatives. And the above discussion does not touch upon the vastly more complicated topic of defining what would constitute "success" within the Learnfare context.

Establishing cause-and-effect relationships ultimately comes down to a process of discounting competing explanations. We can expect that a plethora of over-time numbers will be produced. (We already hear reports that truancy rates in Milwaukee are getting worse.) The problem is that these numbers will be difficult to interpret. The introduction of Learnfare undoubtedly altered the manner in which attendance is measured. Changes in administration of the Milwaukee school system purportedly have led to tightened truancy calculations. To further confound the problem, statewide changes in school attendance requirements and regulations for responding to truancy were introduced at about the same time as Learnfare. Statistical techniques can only deal with so much "noise." When the stakes are high and controversy abounds, a rigorous evaluation is required.

The terms and conditions included in the recently granted waiver request (expanding Learnfare provisions to children aged 6-12 and extending the current program) require an experimental design for testing impacts for the *expanded* Learnfare population. Federal officials should be commended for rectifying this omission in the original Learnfare waiver request. We might still ask, however, whether the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) went far enough. Even at this late date, an experimental requirement could be introduced to test impacts on the original teen Learnfare population. And if one really were interested in learning what works, the design could be structured to test various types of interventions—the current program, the current program plus intensive case management/services (or various service strategies), and intensive case management/services only. Granting waivers was never intended as a strategy to give states free rein. The waivers are intended to encourage experimentation and learning.

Act 3. The mystery that now surrounds Learnfare concerns where the concept is headed. Given the ambitious goals set for the program in Wisconsin, its initial "hard" character, involving automatic sanctions, would probably be viewed as inadequate. Some evolution toward a "softer" approach could be expected. A softer approach would seek a more balanced "social contract—the client's obligation to behave in a fashion consistent with efforts to achieve self-sufficiency would be matched with a public obligation to provide appropriate supports—case management, social services, alternative educational opportunities, and meaningful experiences within conventional school systems. Debate remains about what will constitute a balanced social contract and, fortunately, a great deal will be learned from current experimentation with methods to reach "at-risk" youth. As a speaker at a recent conference on "Welfare and Education" noted, simply forcing kids back into a system where they have already failed (or the school failed them) may not be enough.

Heated debate over the Wisconsin Learnfare model tends to obscure an underlying social dilemma that requires continuing attention. A portion of our youth simply will not be prepared for a postindustrial society that demands a minimal level of human capital.² Although high school graduation rates are at historically high levels—9 out of 10 students failed to complete high school at the turn of the century—the much smaller proportion of those who now fail (about 13 percent) legitimately elicits far greater concern. The almost 6 million young adults (ages 16 to 24 in 1980) who were not in school or failed to graduate from high school faced a world different from that of their predecessors. In 1986, the median earnings of college graduates were four times greater than those of young family heads who were high school dropouts, whereas the difference in 1973 was less than two to one. Between 1973 and 1986, median annual family income for single-mother families declined by 26 percent; for family heads with less than a high school education, by 34 percent.

Structural changes in the economy cannot be ignored. Whereas relatively well-paying jobs in mining and manufacturing declined from 1979 to 1987 by 36 and 24 percent respectively, lower-paying jobs in the retail and services sectors increased by 7 and 24 percent in those years. Over the final 15 years of this century, the proportion of new jobs requiring less than a high school diploma is expected to decline by 22 percent, while jobs requiring some college education will increase by 24 percent. We confront the possibility of importing skilled labor to fill an unmet demand while a significant portion of our native adult population remains unemployable.

Economic transformations aside, there remains the compelling tragedy of young people failing behind. Some 1.8 million young girls will reach age 20 in the year 2000. Given current trends, 40 percent will become pregnant, and half of those will give birth at least once. Only 3 in 5 teen mothers will obtain a high school degree—less than 1 in 2 if they give birth before age 17; over 1 in 3 will have seriously impoverished basic skills; and over 80 percent will not be married. Teen mothers who remain unmarried face a particularly harsh economic future. Their probability of experiencing chronic poverty (i.e., spending at least seven of the next ten years in poverty after giving birth) is 30 times greater than that of a married mother who remains in an intact household.

What do we do with the estimated 13 million "at-risk" school-aged children across the nation? The personal and social dysfunctioning associated with the one million young people who leave high school each year without graduating is sobering: they are 3.5 times more likely to be arrested, 6 times more likely to be a nonmarried parent, 73 times more likely to receive welfare at some point, and 2 times more likely to be unemployed and poor. While it can be argued that getting disadvantaged children into a classroom on a regular basis is a start, should it also be the end point of any policy? I remain skeptical. And will getting them through school to a high school diploma miraculously solve the problems listed above? Not likely. After 1973 the median income of high school graduates dropped by some 30 percent. Besides, we face the dreaded phenomenon of "unobserved heterogeneity"—that those who fall by the wayside differ in some difficult to measure way and a consequence require special help. Consider this: in the mid-1980s some 25,500 students were enrolled in Chicago's inner-city, non-selective schools. Only 9,500 eventually graduated (less than 49 percent). Of these, only 2,000 could read at or above the national average—an average already below that of other industrialized countries.

I have avoided citing numbers on the effects of Learnfare, partly on the assumption that many will nonetheless be put forth. But I was struck by data recently reported by the Employment and Training Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.³ I calculated that for every 100 Milwaukee teen mothers on AFDC in December of 1989 who did not already have a high school diploma or its equivalent, approximately 63 were either exempt from Learnfare or their status was uncertain because of problems in locating the student or verifying key information. Of the remaining 37, 10 were in school and attending regularly, 8 were subject to monthly attendance monitoring under Learnfare rules, and 19 were being sanctioned. We do not know if these numbers would look better or worse in the absence of Learnfare. But it appears that the "leakage" problem (i.e., those exempt and those simply lost to the program) associated with "people changing" initiatives plagues the large, unwieldy Wisconsin Learnfare effort.

The institutional response to the "costs" of hastily implementing a large-scale program in the absence of a systematic process analysis has been slow and halting. While compensation for child care and transportation costs associated with Learnfare requirements have been available from the beginning, only a very modest level of support for case management services, supportive social services, and alternative educational opportunities has been forthcoming. It has been estimated that, if their time were spread over the entire "at-risk" population, Learnfare case managers in Milwaukee would only be able to average four minutes per child per month. Alternative school slots in Milwaukee are filled by November of each school year, and by spring waiting lists exceed their total capacity. Service providers who deal with Milwaukee children affected by Learnfare report that the system by which the children reach them is haphazard and that their response capacity has been overwhelmed. The "people-changing" business is a tough and, as was discovered in the 1960s, expensive undertaking.

The terms and conditions of the Federal approval to extend and expand Learnfare directs Wisconsin toward a more balanced social contract. If these terms are acceptable to the state, an opportunity will be available to examine the contents of this contract. That will require a substitution of objective analysis for political or ideological posturing—on both sides. Whether or not that occurs will determine whether the Wisconsin model of Learnfare becomes an endgame in which attention to the inescapable needs of disadvantaged children is lost amidst the debate about this particular program.

At this point, a set of recommendations normally is appropriate. That would be presumptuous, however, and ignore the underlying complexity of the topic. Rather than rely upon oversold "silver bullets," we need a coherent policy process that moves us beyond truncated perceptions of the poor. One thing we have learned from our poverty research is that not all the poor are alike, nor will they all respond to policy initiatives in the same way. We need a comprehensive and integrated set of

initiatives; some that improve the economic rationality of work for low-income family heads, others that legitimately enhance the human capital of disadvantaged youth and adult job-seekers, still others that aggressively confront counterproductive behaviors.

We have also learned that we treat our children terribly. A decade ago, it was determined that the U.S. child poverty rate was two to three times greater than several other western industrialized countries. Since then, the number of poor children in this country has increased by about one-quarter and their poverty rates are as high now as they were a quarter-century ago. The rush to reduce welfare costs and caseloads should not obscure the real economic suffering of children. We have always known how to do the former—lower welfare guarantees, restrict access to benefits, and impose additional conditions on the receipt of benefits. The real public policy challenge is, and always has been, to reduce dependency and poverty at the same time.

ENDNOTES

1. See "Learnfare: The Wisconsin Experience" by Thomas Corbett, Jeanette Deloya, Wendy Manning, and Liz Uhr in *Focus*, Vol. 12, no. 2, Fall and Winter 1989, pp. 1-10, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

2. The data in this section is taken from the following sources: Schorr, L.B., and Schorr, D. (1988) *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, New York, NY: Doubleday; *Five Million Children: A Statistical Profile of our Poorest Young Citizens* (1990) National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, New York; School of Public Health; *A Vision for America's Future* (1989), Washington, D.C.: Children's Defense Fund; and *The Common Good: Social Welfare and the American Future* (1989) New York, NY: The Ford Foundation.

3. See *The Impact of Learnfare on Milwaukee County Social Service Clients* (1990) John Parasawat and Lois Quinn. Employment and Training Institute: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CAROL CROCE

Every child needs a quality education to succeed in today's world. It is especially true for poor children whose chances of escaping poverty are greatly diminished when they don't finish school. But trying to modify a child's truant behavior by punishing an entire family through economic sanctions is both cruel and ineffective.

Learnfare is a misnomer—it's not about learning and it isn't fair. It does not reinforce positive educational achievements, but instead singles out one group of truant children—teenagers in AFDC households—who are held to a more stringent attendance requirement than is required by state truancy law. It exacerbates family situations already strained by poverty and the pressures of single parenting. It punishes entire families for the truant actions of a single child by cutting their monthly cash incomes. Grants reduced by Learnfare sanctions have resulted in evictions and utility shut-offs and has forced some families into emergency shelters. It has had a perverse and destructive effect on family structure by giving teens unwarranted control over the family's income. And we still don't know why these teens are absent from school.

The touted success of the Learnfare program has yet to be substantiated by its own data. The flaws with the design of the program and its dubious value as a social policy experiment have been reported at this hearing by other speakers. This written testimony will focus on Learnfare's purported effect on truancy rates, the amount of actual services provided to sanctioned teens and the adverse impact that sanctions have on Learnfare families.

There is no evidence that truancy levels among AFDC teens have been affected by Learnfare sanctions. When the Program was hastily implemented in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) did not compile baseline data to determine how many of the teens on AFDC were attending school regularly before the implementation of Learnfare. DHSS often cites the 92% attendance rate for all teenagers on AFDC as a successful outcome of Learnfare sanctions. Without baseline data to substantiate the claim, we simply don't know if those teens would have complied with school attendance requirements in the absence of sanctions. In a November 1989 DHSS report on Learnfare, DHSS itself recognized, "These reports do not prove that Learnfare improves school attendance, decreases the drop-out rate or increases high school graduation rates." ("Additional Data on the First Full Year of Learnfare," Silvia Jackson, Division of Economic Support/DHSS, November 1989).

Learnfare sanctions do not appear to be the effective deterrent that was originally envisioned. The number of sanctions *has not* decreased over time as expected. In fact, the number of sanctioned teens has increased, especially in Milwaukee where 75% of all Learnfare sanctions occur. At the beginning of the 1989 school year, 5% of the teens statewide who were subject to Learnfare were sanctioned; by the end of the school year, the sanction rate had risen to 10.6%. In Milwaukee, 7.7% of Learnfare teens were being sanctioned at the beginning of the school year; the sanction rate rose to 17.6% by the end of the academic year.

It also appears that most teens do not comply with Learnfare attendance requirements even after they have been sanctioned. The Employment and Training Institute's study "The Impact of Learnfare on Milwaukee Teens" found that only 28% of sanctioned teen dependents were in school and complying with attendance requirements two months after the sanction. Among teen parents, only 20% were in school two months after the last sanction. If sanctions are a means to compel truant teens to return to the classroom, it appears that this approach, at least in Milwaukee, has been ineffectual for 72% of the affected teens.

Learnfare does not deal with what causes truant behavior; it deals only with the symptoms. Teens are truant for different reasons, sometimes related to school, other times not: drug and alcohol abuse problems, domestic violence situations in the family, child abuse, etc. Learnfare's sole focus, however, is on monitoring physical presence in a classroom without any required investigation as to why these teens miss school or drop out.

A substantial number of sanctioned Milwaukee teens do experience serious problems in their home life. The Employment and Training Institute's study found that 41% of sanctioned Milwaukee teens came from families involved in the Children's Court system or from families where charges had been made of child abuse and neglect.

What is especially troubling is that DHSS knew when they first implemented Learnfare that these teens were at risk of further abuse or being thrown out of the home if sanctions were imposed. In the DHSS memo where this issue was raised, it was further noted that local welfare offices could identify these troubled teens and exempt them from Learnfare sanctions so as not to exacerbate their already distressed family situation. The memo also noted that exempting these teens would cut into the savings Wisconsin was likely to accrue through sanctions. The Department of Health and Social Services chose not to exempt this vulnerable population of teens. Increased "savings" accrued to the state as a result.

This situation—where teens in severely dysfunctional families are sanctioned—is a just one disturbing example of the detrimental effect that Learnfare sanctions have on AFDC families.

First, the loss of AFDC benefits because of Learnfare throws families into crisis. The reduction in the family's monthly cash income forces families to make hard choices about basic needs—how the rent will be paid, how the heat will stay on and how to keep food on the table. When a teen is removed from the grant, his/her needs do not evaporate. The parent must provide for that child with significantly reduced resources; Learnfare sanctions reduce AFDC benefits 15% to 44% per child, depending on family size. In defense of these sizable reductions, the Department of Health and Social Services has noted that Wisconsin's high AFDC payments, coupled with a slight increase in Food Stamps when the grant is reduced, is sufficient for families to absorb the lost income. While Wisconsin's benefits are higher than some states, levels fall more than 30% below the poverty line. Food Stamp increase of 30 cents for every lost AFDC dollar do not come close to balancing out the hardship of trying to make a rent payment or pay the electricity bill.

There are numerous documented cases of families being evicted for nonpayment of rent, utility cut-offs and situations where people ended up in emergency homeless shelters. Attached to this testimony are case summaries compiled by Community Advocates, a Milwaukee advocacy group. They include:

- A client who was sanctioned under Learnfare for four months, was evicted and her child was sent to live with a relative. The County Social Services agency later admitted that the sanction was in error;

- Another client who was sanctioned for four months based on inaccurate information about her child's monthly attendance. Though the inaccuracy was discovered at the fair hearing, the lost benefits resulted in her electricity being disconnected; and

- A client with two sanctioned teenagers who lost benefits for both children for three months. During the third month she was evicted for non-payment of rent and the family moved to a homeless shelter. At the fair hearing, the County Social Services admitted that the sanction had been made in error.

Second, Learnfare sanctions undermine family discipline. Many teens view Learnfare as a means to use their school attendance as leverage to get privileges, such as staying out late or the purchase of expensive clothes, etc. The teen knows that attendance determines the amount of the family's grant. Learnfare gives the teen an unhealthy control over the family's "purse strings" weakens parental authority within the family structure.

Third, Learnfare sanctions of truant teens is a de facto sanctioning of other siblings. When lost benefits result in an eviction or a utility cut-off or less food at meal time, it punishes the siblings for the actions of a teen family member over whom they have no control. I am not opposed to holding teens accountable for their actions. But cutting income benefits from parents and depriving siblings of basic necessities punishes the wrong people.

That points up another flaw: the Learnfare sanction is directed at the parent, not at the truant child. If social policy is committed to punishing teens for their non-compliant behavior, then the sanction should remove some tangible commodity or privilege that the teens either possess or has control over. For example, some states have implemented truancy prevention programs that revoke drivers' licenses from teens who drop out of school. That sanctioning approach directly affects its target population and is far more appropriate than taking away benefits from an entire family for the actions of a single member.

Last, Learnfare sanctions are based on unrealistic expectations about teen-age maturity and behavior. The assumption underlying Learnfare is that teens as young as 13 years of age have the maturity to understand the value of a high school degree, the long-term consequences of their actions when they skip class, and the relative importance of their being in class compared to other factors that may be affecting their lives, like drug abuse problems or severely dysfunctional family situations. The fact that 41% of Learnfare children in Milwaukee come from families involved in the juvenile court system or who have been charged with child abuse and neglect reflects this sad truth. In general, 18 years of age serves as the benchmark for individual responsibility—voting, serving in the army, and drinking. Only in Wisconsin is there a policy that demands that AFDC children as young as 13 years old—7th and 8th graders—have the maturity to overcome often chaotic family situations and make appropriate decisions about their future. And without access and referral to needed services, such as counseling, drug abuse treatment, tutoring etc. the state expects them to make these judgments on their own.

Critics of the current Learnfare program maintain that truant teens provided appropriate services, not sanctions, will return to school. Services in the existing Learnfare program are not being delivered at the level that has been reported. Learnfare for most teens provides sanctions without services.

In Milwaukee, where nearly all of the case management dollars are allocated, only those teens that are *drop outs* are eligible for case management services. Those teens with poor attendance, who represent more than half of the sanctioned teens, are not served.

For those few teens who do get case management, the services are limited. Learnfare alternative education funds *only* cover 18 and 19 year olds and only if they have dropped out. Sanctioned drop-outs age 13 through 17 years are not eligible for Learnfare alternative education programs. Instead, these youth wait for the few available alternative education spaces within the Milwaukee Public School (MPS) system. As of November 1989, every MPS alternative education program had a waiting list, some are even equal to their size of enrollment. For 13 through 17 year olds in Milwaukee who are sanctioned for poor attendance and are not drop-outs, the services they receive are cosmetic: neither case management nor Learnfare alternative education programs are available.

While daycare and transportation for Learnfare teen parents are mandated support services, this leaves only 24 cents of every Learnfare dollar for all other services. These daycare and transportation services account for 53% of all funds expended on Learnfare. While these are essential services for teen parents, such teens make up only 11% of the Learnfare population statewide (19% in Milwaukee). Fully 23% of Learnfare expenditures go to administration of sanctions, attendance reporting and tracking and other bureaucratic functions.

The full cost of Learnfare has been borne by AFDC families. In its first full year of operation, Learnfare spent \$3.1 million; during the same period, \$3.4 million was garnered through sanctions on Learnfare families. Learnfare, therefore, is paid for not from a new pot of money but from draining families' resources through sanctions. The state, for its own reasons, asserts that it's spent more money—\$7.8 million—on Learnfare families. The truth is, this figure represents only a level of con-

tracting, not the actual level of spending of service (see attached DHSS May 10, 1990 documentation).

Even if services were adequate, there is still no demonstrated need to sanction families. As noted earlier, teens are truant for a variety of reasons that need to be identified and assessed before that child can be successful in school. There will be some children that need a minimal amount of services—daycare for a teen mother, after school tutoring to bring up a teen's reading skills up to grade level—to get them back on track in school. Other children will require more attention and additional services, ranging from counselling to drug abuse therapy to alternative education programs outside the regular school system. At both of these levels, it is the *services and interventions*, NOT the sanctions that get the child back into the education system and on the road to completing their education. Cutting the family's AFDC grant is not the catalyst.

For some teens, all the services and best efforts of the parent, the school and the welfare system will not be enough to get that child back into school. What is to be gained from sanctioning this family? It only serves to impose a financial hardship on other siblings over actions they cannot control and it does not get the truant teen back into school. In these cases, it is more appropriate to bring in other systems and truancy laws for incorrigible children. For example, parents should look to the court system to pursue a CHIPS (Child in Need of Protective Services) petition and let the professionals who are trained to work with difficult children do their job.

There are alternatives to Learnfare that would better meet the stated goal of ensuring that teens get the education they need to be self-sufficient. Instead of relying on Learnfare sanctions, additional funding should be provided to the state's Children At Risk program. This is a model program that identifies all children at risk of failing in school and offers needed services. Milwaukee currently has a waiting list of children who have been identified as needing Children At Risk services but the funds are not available.

We should not experiment with our children through Learnfare. There is no evidence that sanctions work *best* at keeping or returning troubled youth to school; perhaps even more significantly there is no evidence that even those who might attend will learn because of the threat of sanction. Learning is a positive human experience that drives us all; it is incentives and good programs that teens need.

Attachments.

Attachment 1

The following case studies were compiled from actual client files from Community Advocates, an advocacy group in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. These clients were referred to Legal Action of Wisconsin for representation.

CASE 1

Client terminated from AFDC for 3 months as a result of a learnfare sanction. According to learnfare rules the grant should have been reduced to \$248 instead of terminated, but the County Administration cut benefits completely. When the case went to a fair hearing the County admitted that the first month's sanction had been in error. Legal Action was able to establish that there was good cause for the absences in the other two months (the teen was recovering from a car accident). Therefore, the County was ordered to restore all benefits. As a result of the lost benefits, the client had been threatened with eviction.

CASE 2

Client had been sanctioned under learnfare for 4 months. The sanction was admitted by the County to have been an error. Because of the lost benefits, the client was evicted and her child had to live with the client's sister.

CASE 3

Client had been evicted before a learnfare sanction went into effect. The client's children were temporarily out of state because of a family crisis. The County erroneously sanctioned the client for these months. Because of the money lost through the sanction, the client was unable to afford housing for her children when they returned to the state.

CASE 4

Client had 2 teens taken off her grant for 3 months as a result of a learnfare sanction. During the third month she was evicted for nonpayment of rent and had to move into a shelter. The County admitted that the sanction had been an error. The sanction had been imposed because the client allegedly had not provided school enrollment information. At a fair hearing it was established that the client had indeed done all the required reporting on time and it simply had not been processed.

CASE 5

Client was sanctioned for 4 months because the County claimed the teen had more than 2 absences per month. At the hearing it was established that the county had insufficient evidence to impose the sanction. Because of the loss of benefits, the electricity was shut off.

CASE 6

Client's child had been hospitalized for an extended period of time. Upon returning to school the child provided a doctor's excuse for the absences. The particular school where the child attended considered the days as unexcused absences because the excuse did not come from a parent. The client was sanctioned.

CASE 7

A family of five children was sanctioned under learnfare for 3 of the teens. The teens had not been enrolled in school because they were temporarily living in a shelter. The sanction delayed attempts at acquiring permanent housing for months.

05/10/90

SUMMARY OF LEARNFARE EXPENDITURES FOR COUNTIES AND TRIBES FOR 1987 1988 & 1989
 W/P NAME: LEARNFARE

AFS LINE #	LEARNFARE	PAYMENTS 1987	CONTRACTS 1987	PAYMENTS 1988	CONTRACTS 1988	PAYMENTS THRU DEC 1989 RECONCILE I	CONTRACTS 1989	CONTRACTS 1990
281	ADMINISTRATION	\$83,546.00	\$83,546.00	\$470,547.00	\$470,547.00	\$470,547.00	\$470,547.00	\$469,578.00
281	ADMINISTRATION MILWAUKEE	\$61,342.00	\$61,342.00	\$368,053.00	\$368,053.00	\$368,053.00	\$368,053.00	\$402,566.00
137	LEARNFARE DAYCARE	\$51,056.00	\$502,273.00	\$296,295.00	\$2,780,544.00	\$372,615.00	\$2,564,985.00	\$2,958,665.00
137	LEARNFARE DAYCARE-MILWAUKEE	\$65,492.00	\$527,589.00	\$925,899.00	\$2,824,065.00	\$1,444,557.00	\$2,829,118.00	\$2,735,335.00
133	LEARNFARE TRANSPORTATION	\$1,750.00	\$106,437.00	\$26,942.00	\$507,984.00	\$71,445.00	\$528,694.00	\$543,206.00
133	LEARNFARE TRANSPORTATION-MILW	\$0.00	\$96,441.00	\$48,126.00	\$527,589.00	\$174,840.00	\$522,106.00	\$506,694.00
193	MILWAUKEE LEARNFARE AIDS					\$117,111.00	\$117,243.00	\$117,243.00
131	MILWAUKEE LEARNFARE STAFF					\$81,052.00	\$96,250.00	\$246,286.00
281	MILWAUKEE LEARNFARE HEARINGS					\$37,657.00	\$37,657.00	\$0.00
57,193	MILWAUKEE DAY CARE ELIGIBILITY	\$25,596.00	\$35,000.00	\$67,058.00	\$74,410.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
193	LEARNFARE STARTUP	\$0.00	\$21,500.00					
		\$286,776.00	\$1,514,128.00	\$2,212,920.00	\$7,553,192.00	\$3,137,277.00	\$7,834,547.00	\$7,979,673.00

} 363,529

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SOURCE OF INFORMATION WAS CARS FOR DEC 89 RECONCILE I AND TRIBES STATEWIDE TOTALS FOR SEPTEMBER 89. INFORMATION FOR 1987 AND 1988 CAME FROM FINAL CARS REPORTS AND TRIBES STATEWIDE SUMMARY REPORTS FOR CY 1987 AND 1988.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PATRICIA GOODRICH

GOOD MORNING. MY NAME IS PATRICIA GOODRICH AND I AM THE SECRETARY OF THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INVITING GOVERNOR THOMPSON TO ADDRESS YOU AND FOR ALLOWING ME TO APPEAR FOR HIM TODAY. IT IS TRULY A PLEASURE AND AN HONOR TO BE TESTIFYING BEFORE YOU ON WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE PROGRAM.

LEARNFARE IS ABOUT EDUCATION AND THE INDEPENDENCE FROM PUBLIC WELFARE THAT EDUCATION CAN BRING TO THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF WISCONSIN TEENS.

LEARNFARE IS ABOUT ENCOURAGING WELFARE TEENS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENCOURAGING THEIR PARENTS TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THAT PROCESS.

AND, LEARNFARE IS ABOUT IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS OF TEENS WHO ARE NOT IN SCHOOL AND FINDING WAYS TO ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS.

OF ALL THE PROGRAMS THAT COMPRISE WISCONSIN'S WELFARE REFORM INITIATIVE, AND THERE ARE MANY, NONE IS MORE INNOVATIVE OR MORE IMPORTANT THAN LEARNFARE -- THROUGH LEARNFARE WE ARE PROVIDED THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A DIRECT AND POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE FUTURES OF OUR CHILDREN, AND THROUGH THEM, THE FUTURE OF OUR STATE AND NATION.

WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE PROGRAM, THEN, IS ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT EMBODIED IN THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT OF 1986, LEGISLATION WITH WHICH THE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR FROM NEW YORK IS INTIMATELY FAMILIAR.

TO FULLY UNDERSTAND LEARNFARE, I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL TO VIEW THE PROGRAM IN THE CONTEXT OF WISCONSIN'S OVERALL WELFARE REFORM INITIATIVE.

DURING GOVERNOR THOMPSON'S 1986 GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN, WISCONSIN CITIZENS MADE KNOWN THEIR FRUSTRATION OVER THE PUBLIC WELFARE SYSTEM. THERE WAS A CLEAR CONCERN THAT PUBLIC ASSISTANCE HAD BECOME A WAY OF LIFE FOR SOME PEOPLE -- A WAY OF LIFE THAT, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS BEING PASSED ON TO THEIR CHILDREN.

THE FACT IS THAT WELFARE WAS NO LONGER FULFILLING ITS ORIGINAL INTENT OF PROVIDING TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS DURING DIFFICULT TIMES IN THEIR LIVES.

DISINCENTIVES TO WORK HAD DEVELOPED WITHIN PROGRAMS WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY INTENDED ONLY TO TIDE PEOPLE OVER UNTIL THEY WERE ABLE TO FIND EMPLOYMENT. SOME PEOPLE SIMPLY COULD NOT LEAVE WELFARE.

TO ADDRESS THIS CONCERN, GOVERNOR THOMPSON DEVELOPED A PLAN TO REFOCUS WISCONSIN'S WELFARE PROGRAMS ON A SINGLE OBJECTIVE: TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE WELFARE DEPENDENCY.

THE GOVERNOR PROPOSED A THREE-FOLD STRATEGY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF INCENTIVES TO WORK, REQUIRING THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION OF ABSENT PARENTS IN RAISING THEIR CHILDREN, AND ENCOURAGING TEENS ON WELFARE TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

AND WE HAVE REDUCED WELFARE DEPENDENCY. BETWEEN JANUARY OF 1987 AND DECEMBER, 1989. OUR AFDC CASELOAD HAS DECLINED BY OVER 19%. WHILE THIS DECLINE IS NOT TOTALLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO OUR WELFARE REFORM EFFORTS, OUR PROGRAMS HAVE HAD AN EFFECT IN HELPING PEOPLE BECOME INDEPENDENT.

BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS, CLIENT ADVOCATE GROUPS, COUNTY AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND FRONT-LINE STAFF WERE INCLUDED IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNFARE. ADDITIONALLY, THREE PUBLIC HEARINGS ON LEARNFARE ADMINISTRATIVE RULES WERE HELD IN MADISON, MILWAUKEE, AND WAUSAU IN APRIL, 1988. FURTHERMORE, CLIENT ADVOCATE GROUPS ARE REPRESENTED ON THE LEARNFARE COORDINATING COMMITTEE WHICH CONTINUES TO MEET MONTHLY IN MILWAUKEE, WHERE NEARLY HALF OF THE LEARNFARE POPULATION RESIDES, TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE PROGRAM ISSUES.

IN SHORT, LEARNFARE WAS NOT DEVELOPED IN A VACUUM NOR DOES IT OPERATE IN ONE. WE CONTINUE TO LEARN AND EVOLVE, UTILISING A WIDE VARIETY OF INPUT.

AS ORIGINALLY PASSED BY THE WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE IN 1987, LEARNFARE WAS RESTRICTED TO TEEN PARENTS ELIGIBLE FOR THE AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN (AFDC) PROGRAM. GOVERNOR THOMPSON, REASONING THAT ALL TEENS ON WELFARE NEED AN EDUCATION, USED HIS VETO AUTHORITY TO EXPAND LEARNFARE TO INCLUDE ESSENTIALLY ALL AFDC TEENS, 13 THROUGH 19. BY SUSTAINING HIS VETO, THE LEGISLATURE SUPPORTED THE GOVERNOR'S ACTION.

THE PHILOSOPHY UNDERLYING WISCONSIN'S WELFARE REFORM INITIATIVE, INCLUDING LEARNFARE, IS THAT THE STATE MAY HAVE CERTAIN REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS OF WELFARE RECIPIENTS IN RETURN FOR PROVIDING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. THE STATE'S REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF WELFARE TEENS IS THAT THEY ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY IN ORDER TO GET THE EDUCATION THEY WILL NEED TO COMPETE IN THE WORKFORCE -- JUST AS THE REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF THE J.O.B.S. COMPONENT OF THE FAMILY SUPPORT ACT IS THAT ADULTS WORK OR PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAMS.

IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN THE LACK OF A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION AND CHRONIC DEPENDENCE ON WELFARE? ABSOLUTELY. ACCORDING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN'S INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON POVERTY (I.R.P.), THERE IS A GROWING BODY OF EMPIRICAL DATA WHICH CONFIRMS WHAT HAS LONG BEEN SUSPECTED. THOSE WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA CAN EXPECT TO EARN 60% MORE THAN THOSE WITH LESS SCHOOLING -- ON THE DOWNSIDE, PEOPLE WHO HAVE A LOW EARNING CAPACITY, THAT IS, PEOPLE WITH A POOR WORK HISTORY AND/OR LACKING A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, ARE MORE LIKELY TO BECOME LONG-TERM WELFARE RECIPIENTS. THIS FACT IS PARTICULARLY DISTURBING TO US, GIVEN THAT EACH YEAR, ABOUT TEN AND ONE-HALF PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

IN THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT DROP OUT OF SCHOOL -- A STAGGERING STATISTIC CONSIDERING THE BLEAK OUTLOOK FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS AND THE ASSOCIATED COST TO SOCIETY, BOTH IN ECONOMIC TERMS AS WELL AS UNTAPPED HUMAN POTENTIAL.

FURTHERMORE, AS THE POPULATION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES CONTINUES TO GROW AMONG THE GENERAL POPULATION, THOSE WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION FACE ALMOST INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS WHEN IT COMES TO SECURING ADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT. WHEREAS 35 OR 40 YEARS AGO THERE WERE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS, THIS IS NO LONGER THE CASE. I.R.P. STATES THAT ONLY 14% OF ALL NEW JOBS CREATED THROUGH THE START OF THE NEXT CENTURY WILL NOT REQUIRE A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION.

THUS, THERE EXISTS A DEFINITE NEED FOR PROGRAMS WHICH ENCOURAGE SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH EDUCATION. THIS IS WHY THE GOVERNOR PROPOSED LEARNFARE.

LEARNFARE CURRENTLY COVERS OVER 27,000 AFDC TEENS MONTHLY AND UTILIZES FINANCIAL SANCTIONS IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO ACHIEVE ITS GOAL.

AFDC TEENS WHO FAIL TO ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY, WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE, ARE SUBJECT TO SANCTIONS AVERAGING ABOUT \$113 PER MONTH PER TEEN. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE, ALSO, THAT THE AFDC GRANT AMOUNT FOR A FAMILY OF THREE IN WISCONSIN IS \$517, WHICH IS THE EIGHTH HIGHEST IN THE NATION. THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF LEARNFARE SANCTIONS STATEWIDE PER MONTH THUS FAR DURING THE 1989-90 SCHOOL YEAR IS ABOUT 2200 OR ABOUT 8% OF THE TOTAL LEARNFARE POPULATION.

TO ME, IT IS VERY SIGNIFICANT THAT NINETY-TWO PERCENT OF THE AFDC TEENS SUBJECT TO LEARNFARE REQUIREMENTS, COMPLY WITH THOSE REQUIREMENTS MONTHLY. THIS MEANS THAT, EACH MONTH, OVER 25,000 AFDC TEENS IN WISCONSIN ARE EITHER IN SCHOOL, OR HAVE A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE FOR NOT BEING THERE.

HOW MANY OF THESE TEENS ARE ATTENDING BECAUSE OF LEARNFARE? WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW YET. AS I.R.P.'S THOMAS CORBETT, WHO IS TESTIFYING LATER TODAY, OBSERVED IN A PAPER HE WROTE ON LEARNFARE, LEARNFARE'S MOST SIGNIFICANT, THOUGH UNMEASURABLE, SUCCESS MAY BE THAT IT SERVES TO DETER TEENS FROM CUTTING CLASSES IN THE FIRST PLACE. LEARNFARE, BY ITS VERY EXISTENCE, IS SERVING TO PREVENT AFDC TEENS FROM ENGAGING IN POOR ATTENDANCE OR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL ALTOGETHER -- BUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS OCCURS IS NOT KNOWN.

WE REALIZE THAT SOME TEENS MAY NEED HELP STAYING IN SCHOOL. CONSEQUENTLY, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM, WE HAVE PROVIDED SUPPORTIVE SERVICES INCLUDING DAY CARE AND TRANSPORTATION FOR TEEN PARENTS. AS LEARNFARE EVOLVED, WE ADDED ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT FUNDING.

STATEWIDE, LEARNFARE CONTRACTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1990 TOTAL IN EXCESS OF \$9.6 MILLION, AND OVER 90% OF THESE FUNDS ARE BARMARKED SPECIFICALLY FOR LEARNFARE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICE ADMINISTRATION.

OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, MORE THAN \$1 MILLION FOR LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE STATEWIDE. ADDITIONALLY, DURING THE SAME PERIOD, OVER \$1.7 MILLION IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION FUNDING FOR MILWAUKEE LEARNFARE TEENS WILL BE AVAILABLE. WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF ALLOCATING THE NEW FUNDING TO COUNTIES SO THAT IT IS AVAILABLE FOR THE 1990-91 SCHOOL YEAR. IN FACT, THE STATE HAS ALREADY SIGNED A CONTRACT FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY'S LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT ALLOCATION AND NEGOTIATIONS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO PROVIDE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH LEARNFARE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION FUNDING.

BASED ON FIRST QUARTER CALENDAR YEAR 1990 DATA, IN COMPARISON WITH THE SAME QUARTER LAST YEAR, OUR PROJECTED 1990 "SAVINGS" DUE TO LEARNFARE SANCTIONS WILL BE SLIGHTLY OVER \$2.6 MILLION. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT FAR MORE, IN FACT ALMOST 3 TIMES MORE MONEY, IS BEING SPENT ON LEARNFARE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THAN IS BEING "SAVED" THROUGH LEARNFARE SANCTIONS.

LEARNFARE WAS NEVER INTENDED TO SAVE MONEY IN THE SHORT TERM -- IT IS, RATHER, A LONG TERM INVESTMENT IN OUR YOUTH AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THE HEALTH OF OUR STATE AND NATION.

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED WITH LEARNFARE SUPPORTIVE SERVICES THUS FAR?

AS AN EXAMPLE, IN MILWAUKEE OUR LEARNFARE CASE MANAGERS TRY TO PERSONALLY CONTACT EACH SANCTIONED TEEN DROPOUT TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO RETURN TO SCHOOL. SUPPORTIVE SERVICE NEEDS SUCH AS DAY CARE AND TRANSPORTATION ARE ASSESSED AND ADDRESSED.

LEARNFARE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGES THE FACT THAT NOT ALL CHILDREN CAN ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN THE REGULAR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT. TO DATE, OUR MILWAUKEE CASE MANAGERS HAVE WRITTEN 622 CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE LEARNFARE FUNDING FOR TEEN DROPOUTS TO ATTEND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THEY HAVE ALSO REFERRED 647 TEENS BACK TO THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

LEARNFARE CASE MANAGERS WORK WITH DROPOUTS ON A DAILY BASIS AND FULLY UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEARNFARE SANCTION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES. THEY CONFIRM THAT THE SANCTION SERVES AS A CATALYST FOR TEENS TO TAKE ACTION TO COMPLY WITH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. WHEREAS SANCTIONS PROVIDE THE INCENTIVE TO ATTEND SCHOOL, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES ENABLE REGULAR ATTENDANCE AND REMOVE EXCUSES FOR NONATTENDANCE. I BELIEVE THAT, TOGETHER, SANCTIONS AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROVIDE THE BALANCE IN THIS PROGRAM THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEARNFARE'S SUCCESS TO DATE.

POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS A KEY FACTOR IN POOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE -
- CONVERSELY, LACK OF SUCCESS CONTRIBUTES TO POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

IN WISCONSIN, ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN THROUGH AGE 17 MAY BE PAID FOR BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT. UNTIL LEARNFARE, HOWEVER, IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT AFDC TEENS 18 AND OVER, INCLUDING SOME TEEN PARENTS, WERE ON THEIR OWN IF THEY NEEDED ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL. LEARNFARE HAS STEPPED IN TO MEET THE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION NEEDS OF AFDC TEENS 18 AND 19 YEARS OF AGE, ALLOWING LITERALLY HUNDREDS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL BY STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND PAYING THEIR ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM TUITION COSTS.

FURTHER, NEW ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION FUNDING RECENTLY APPROVED BY GOVERNOR THOMPSON WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD MEETING THE NEEDS OF AFDC TEEN DROPOUTS IN MILWAUKEE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 17.

LEARNFARE HAS, WITHOUT QUESTION, STIRRED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AND CONTROVERSY IN WISCONSIN AND AROUND THE NATION. FIRST, BECAUSE IT LINKS WELFARE BENEFITS WITH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND SECOND, BECAUSE IT PLACES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACTIONS OF CHILDREN SQUARELY ON THE SHOULDERS OF THEIR PARENTS.

PROponents ALL OVER THE COUNTRY HAVE CONTACTED US FOR DETAILED INFORMATION TO USE IN DEVELOPING SIMILAR LEGISLATION. WISCONSIN STAFF WERE RECENTLY IN MICHIGAN TESTIFYING ON LEARNFARE, WHERE LEGISLATION NEARLY IDENTICAL TO WISCONSIN'S IS BEING CONSIDERED. OHIO IS CURRENTLY OPERATING A PROGRAM THAT IS MODELED AFTER WISCONSIN'S. OTHER STATES ARE LOOKING AT WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE MODEL AS THEY IMPLEMENT THEIR JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND BASIC SKILLS TRAINING (J.O.B.S.) PROGRAMS.

PROGRAM CRITICS ACCUSE LEARNFARE OF ALLOWING TEENS TO HOLD THEIR PARENTS "HOSTAGE" -- CONJURING IMAGES OF LARGE NUMBERS OF WELFARE TEENS LASHING OUT AGAINST THEIR PARENTS, THREATENING TO SKIP SCHOOL AND CAUSE A LEARNFARE SANCTION UNLESS THEIR DEMANDS ARE MET. THIS IS NOT SUPPORTED BY THE FACTS.

THE FACT IS THAT MOST WELFARE PARENTS, LIKE MOST NON-WELFARE PARENTS, EXERCISE CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO THEIR CHILDREN, AS IS EVIDENCED BY OUR 92% COMPLIANCE RATE. FOR THOSE PARENTS WHO ARE NOT ABLE TO CONTROL THEIR CHILDREN, LEARNFARE SERVES AS A CATALYST TO GET THE HELP THEY NEED. LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT EXISTS TO OFFER SUPPORT TO SUCH FAMILIES.

THE LEARNFARE SANCTION IS MEANT TO ENCOURAGE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT - - BUT IT IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR IT.

THERE IS A FAMILY IN JAMESVILLE, WISCONSIN THAT HAS FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNFARE'S IMPACT AND CAN ATTEST TO THE FACT THAT SANCTIONS DO LEAD TO CORRECTIVE ACTION. A YEAR AGO, THE MOTHER IN THIS FAMILY LEARNED THAT HER 17 YEAR OLD SON HAD A SEVERE ATTENDANCE PROBLEM AND HER WELFARE GRANT WAS CUT UNDER LEARNFARE. SHE WAS FORCED TO CONFRONT HER SON WITH EVIDENCE OF HIS NONATTENDANCE AND, IN SO DOING,

LEARNED THAT HE ALSO HAD A SERIOUS DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEM. SHE INSISTED THAT HE SEEK TREATMENT FOR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY AND RETURN TO SCHOOL WHICH, AFTER A VERY DIFFICULT AND TRYING PERIOD FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY, HE DID. THIS YOUNG MAN IS NOW DRUG FREE AND WILL SOON BE GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

SOME PEOPLE QUESTION THE FAIRNESS OF THE PROGRAM. CBS'S 48 HOURS NEWS PROGRAM CAME TO MILWAUKEE AND ASKED A YOUNG AFDC TEEN MOTHER IF SHE FELT "PICKED UPON OR UNFAIRLY TREATED" AS A RESULT OF LEARNFARE SANCTIONS. SHE ANSWERED, AND I QUOTE, "IN THE BEGINNING I DID, BUT NOW THAT I LOOK BACK AND NOW THAT I'M IN SCHOOL AND EVERYTHING, I DON'T FEEL THAT I WAS PICKED ON. I DON'T FEEL THAT IT'S UNFAIR. BECAUSE IF IT WASN'T FOR THEM CUTTING IT (MEANING HER AFDC BENEFITS), I WOULD NEVER GO BACK TO SCHOOL. AND THEN I WOULD NEVER HAVE ANYTHING TO TAKE CARE OF MY BABIES WITH."

EDUCATORS THROUGHOUT WISCONSIN HAVE TOLD US THAT THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR PATTERNS WHICH ULTIMATELY RESULT IN POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ARE OFTEN EVIDENT AT A VERY EARLY AGE. BY THE TIME A CHILD REACHES AGE 13, WHEN THE CURRENT LEARNFARE PROGRAM KICKS IN, IT CAN BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CORRECT PROBLEMS THAT ALREADY EXIST. REACHING YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES, THEN, IS KEY TO SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESSING POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AMONG TEENS AND, ULTIMATELY, WELFARE DEPENDENCE.

WISCONSIN'S PLAN TO EXPAND LEARNFARE TO CHILDREN SIX THROUGH TWELVE YEARS OLD WAS RECENTLY APPROVED BY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY, DR. LOUIS SULLIVAN. OUR WAIVER APPLICATION, FILED IN THE FALL OF 1989, FOCUSED ON THE PREVENTION OF ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS. THEREFORE, THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS I RECENTLY SIGNED ALSO FOCUS ON PREVENTION AND WILL ALLOW SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED AT THEIR ONSET IN THE EARLY GRADES. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS AGREEMENT WILL ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO THE ROOT CAUSES OF POOR ATTENDANCE AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN THROUGH CASE MANAGEMENT, PRIOR TO SANCTIONING.

UNDER THE NEW PLAN, AS LONG AS THE FAMILY OF A CHILD SIX THROUGH 12 COOPERATES WITH THE LEARNFARE CASE MANAGER, A SANCTION WILL NOT BE IMPOSED.

FEDERAL APPROVAL OF THIS PLAN INCLUDES AUTHORIZATION FOR WISCONSIN TO CONTINUE ITS CURRENT LEARNFARE PROGRAM FOR TEENS, AS MODIFIED WITH A STRENGTHENED CASE MANAGEMENT COMPONENT, AS WELL AS OPERATE THE EXPANDED PROGRAM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, THROUGH SEPTEMBER, 1994. AUTHORIZING STATE LEGISLATION MUST BE ENACTED PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNFARE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

IN CLOSING, LET ME SAY THAT I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT LEARNFARE WORKS.

YOU UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD LIKE ME TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A SCIENTIFIC PROOF SHOWING HOW WELL IT WORKS BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, I CANNOT. I AM UNABLE AT

THIS POINT TO TELL YOU THE EXTENT TO WHICH LEARNFARE SERVES AS THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR TEENS TO ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY. WE HAVE NOT YET ESTABLISHED A CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNFARE AND IMPROVED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, NOR CAN WE SAY WITH SCIENTIFIC CERTAINTY THAT TEENS WITH PRIOR ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS HAVE ACTUALLY IMPROVED SOLELY BECAUSE OF LEARNFARE.

AN INDEPENDENT, FORMAL EVALUATION OF LEARNFARE WILL ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WHILE THE FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PRODUCT IS DUE IN 1993. THE EVALUATOR'S VERY EARLY RESEARCH DID, HOWEVER, BEAR OUT OUR SUSPICIONS THAT MANY SANCTIONED TEENS WERE ALSO INVOLVED IN OTHER PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY OUR DEPARTMENT -- SUCH AS JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

WHY, THEN, DO I BELIEVE IN THIS PROGRAM? FOR SEVERAL FUNDAMENTAL REASONS.

FIRST, THE GOAL IS A WORTHY ONE -- TO REDUCE FUTURE WELFARE DEPENDENCY AMONG TODAY'S POPULATION OF AFDC TEENS.

SECOND, THE PHILOSOPHY IS SOUND. AFDC TEENS HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SOCIETY IN RETURN FOR THE ASSISTANCE THEY RECEIVE -- AND THAT OBLIGATION IS TO ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY. REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WILL INCREASE THEIR CHANCES OF FINDING ADEQUATE EMPLOYMENT.

THIRD, THE PROGRAM MECHANICS ARE STRUCTURED SO THAT PROGRAM GOALS CAN BE ACHIEVED. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AND SANCTIONS ARE BALANCED SO AS TO PROVIDE THE INCENTIVE AND THE MEANS FOR TEENS TO ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY.

FINALLY, MY BELIEF IS BASED ON WHAT I KNOW TO BE HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN. THROUGH MY STAFF, I AM IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH OUR CASE MANAGERS, AND OUR COUNTY AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF -- AND THEREFORE KNOW THE POSITIVE IMPACT LEARNFARE IS HAVING ON LEARNFARE FAMILIES STATEWIDE. OUR RESPONSE TO THE INPUT OF THESE KEY PLAYERS HAS BEEN TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION; TO EXPAND AND ENHANCE THESE SUCCESSFUL FORMS OF INTERVENTION FOR TEENS WITH ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS.

I WISH TO THANK YOU AGAIN FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE EXPERIENCE WITH YOU AND URGE YOU TO SUPPORT OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THIS MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE. AT THIS TIME I AM PREPARED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ON LEARNFARE.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN PAWASARAT

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy, I am John Pawasarat, Director and a Scientist with the Employment and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I appreciate your request to testify on the University of Wisconsin evaluation of the state's Learnfare policy. Learnfare, while very easy to understand, is quite complex to administer and requires the cooperation of 429 locally autonomous school districts, 72 county income maintenance departments, and the state Department of Health and Social Services. While the State of Wisconsin has one of the most sophisticated computerized systems for administration of AFDC, food stamps and medical assistance programs in the nation, implementation of the policy is dependent not only on computer matches but decisions of thousands of income maintenance workers and teachers across the state and accurate reporting of this data to the various computerized systems involved in the implementation.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services maintains a computerized file of all AFDC recipients in the state, which is available to summarize administrative data on teens under the Learnfare policy. This data is very limited in nature and is flawed by inaccuracies that preclude its use as outcome data.¹ Reliable data on school achievement and completion rates will only be possible after review of actual school records, which is scheduled to begin in Milwaukee and five other school districts in the state during 1991.²

Our first report summarized the state's computerized welfare—records on the Learnfare status of AFDC teens in Milwaukee County as of December, 1989. However, this data does not provide information necessary to measure the outcomes of Learnfare. It can only be used to define the population to be studied and to track the status of participants for AFDC check-writing purposes.

REPORTED SCHOOL STATUS OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY TEEN PARENTS AND DEPENDENTS

[December, 1989]

Status	Teen parents	Dependents living with parents
In-school regular student status	193	6,847
In-school on monthly monitoring	145	933
Unverified, attendance not yet reviewed, not found ³	281	2,159
Non-graduate exempt from school under Learnfare	907	270
High school graduate/G.E.D.	735	35
Sanctioned	364	1,428
Total	2,625	11,672

As noted above, nearly half of teen parents who have not graduated from high school, 907 in Milwaukee County, are exempted from school under the Learnfare requirement although the reasons for most exemptions are not available in the state's data system. According to caseworkers a large number of teen parents are exempted from school by obtaining a waiver from their high school stating that they cannot graduate by age twenty. In December, 415 teen parents who had not completed high school were exempted from high school attendance and then subsequently exempted from workfare because they had children under age two, 144 teen parents were exempted from high school attendance and then subsequently exempted from workfare because they were pregnant, and 116 non-graduates exempted from high school attendance had been placed in mandatory work programs, including 17 teens sanctioned that month under workfare. Another 106 teen parents were temporarily out of school with infants under three months of age. By contrast, relatively few dependent teens are exempt from school, in part because eighteen-year-old dependents are eligible for AFDC in Wisconsin only if they are in-school and expected to graduate or earn a CED credential by age nineteen.

The state's administrative records of the school status of Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare between September, 1988 and December, 1989 were reported for two months after each teen's last sanction. State data showed that twenty-eight percent of the teens had returned to school and were reported regularly attending two months after their last sanction. This group included 317 teen parents (twenty percent of all sanctioned teen parents) and 1,530 dependent teens (thirty percent of all sanctioned teen dependents in the county).

REPORTED SCHOOL STATUS OF TEEN PARENTS TWO MONTHS AFTER THEIR LAST SANCTION

(As of December, 1989)

	Number	Percent of total Total
In-school	317	20.3
Still sanctioned ⁴	366	23.4
Unverified or not found	92	5.9
Exempt from school ⁵	549	35.2
No longer on AFDC	238	15.2
Total	1,562	100.0

REPORTED SCHOOL STATUS OF TEEN DEPENDENTS TWO MONTHS AFTER THEIR LAST SANCTION

(As of December, 1989)

	Number	Percent of total
In-school	1,530	30.3
Still sanctioned ⁶	1,428	28.3
Unverified or not found	256	5.1
Exempt from school ⁷	116	2.2
Moved to AFDC case headed by a non-parent	29	0.6
No longer on AFDC	1,691	33.5
Total	5,050	100.0

These numbers have generated a great deal of controversy in Wisconsin, in large part because they conflict with earlier state reports that, "The vast majority of teens are sanctioned for only a few months before returning to school and attending regularly." ⁸

It has become an unfortunate new Wisconsin pastime to search for a single number that captures the experience of AFDC teens under the Learnfare policy. Some Learnfare critics have cited the twenty-eight percent figure as evidence of Learnfare's failure. State officials recently calculated a new percentage of sanctioned teens returning to school based on these numbers, 39.4 percent, which excludes those teens who leave AFDC after sanctioning. An even more favorable percentage, forty-six percent, could be generated if all sanctioned teens subsequently exempted from any school attendance could somehow also be removed from the Learnfare experimental group.

We believe that reliance upon one or two percentages to judge the complex experiences under Learnfare is ill-advised. First, we have yet to generate the baseline data on the historical school experience (completion rates, credits earned, attendance patterns) of AFDC teens prior to the Learnfare experiment. Secondly, AFDC school status codes have serious limitations with practices reportedly varying even within counties for collecting and coding school enrollment and attendance. Finally, just as the experiences of adults on AFDC have ranged from long-term dependence of five or more years to short-term participation during bouts of unemployment, the subpopulations used for hypothesis testing in the Learnfare evaluation will require careful attention and analysis.

To date a larger number of sanctioned teens in Milwaukee County have left AFDC than have remained on aid while returning to school. Recent patterns of movement on and off welfare will be compared to the pre-Learnfare period, controlling for changes in the labor market, to determine if the Learnfare experiment has effected the movement of families or individual youth off welfare. In the case of teen parents, social service records will also be used where available to determine the numbers, if any, of these teens' infants who remained on aid or moved into foster care with another casehead or in another household. The strength of our research design is its use of non-welfare data sources for labor market participation, school completion, and birth rates insuring that the experience of *all* teens in the experimental group including those who leave aid will be evaluated.

The Wisconsin Learnfare experiment addresses the national goal of breaking the cycle of poverty and dependency through education and along with the Wisconsin

Work Experience and Job Training Program and Community Work Experience Program through employment training. These outcomes cannot be measured quickly, but are essential for understanding the impact and value of the Learnfare policy experiment. As we proceed, we welcome the recommendations and insights of this Committee and the state and Federal departments in our evaluation work.

ENDNOTES

1. Thirteen percent of the 29,269 teen parents and dependents under the Learnfare requirement in the state computer system in July, 1989 had missing or inconsistent entries for Learnfare status or highest grade completed.

2. The Family Support Administration's June 4, 1990 Waiver Authority and Special Conditions provides for renegotiation of the evaluation contract to collect school attendance data on AFDC teens by September 1, 1991. We have agreed to establish an accelerated time-line for collection of attendance data and information on credit attainment. A survey of the 429 Wisconsin school districts and follow-up interviews will be used to determine the extent to which methods of collecting and reporting school attendance data were altered both in response to Learnfare and to the Wisconsin Compulsory Attendance and Truancy Prevention Act of 1987.

3. This group includes 274 teens with Learnfare school codes of "not found," 824 teens whose attendance was not verified for that month, 1,106 thirteen year olds whose attendance has not yet been reviewed, and 236 fourteen to nineteen year olds miscoded as "children under age 13."

4. This total includes 54 teen parents sanctioned only in December, 145 parents sanctioned for two to four months, 116 parents sanctioned for five to nine months, and 51 teen parents sanctioned for ten to fifteen months. Eighteen year old teens who are sanctioned as dropouts are not included since they are only eligible as AFDC dependents if they are in school.

5. Sixty-seven of the sanctioned teen parents were exempted from school attendance to care for their infants under three months of age. Those teens who secure a waiver from their high school stating that they cannot graduate by age twenty are given workfare codes. 132 of the Learnfare sanctioned teen parents who had not completed high school were subsequently placed in mandatory workfare programs, 261 teen parents who were exempted from school attendance under Learnfare were subsequently exempted from workfare because they had a child under two years of age, and 42 teen parents exempted from school were subsequently exempted from workfare because they were pregnant.

6. This total includes 171 teens only sanctioned in December, 639 teens sanctioned for two to four months, 422 teens sanctioned for five to nine months, and 196 teens who have been sanctioned for ten to fifteen months.

7. This group includes only thirteen to seventeen year old dependents since eighteen year old dependents are eligible for AFDC only if they are attending school.

8. "Analysis of Learnfare Statistics, September 1988—June 1989," Silvia Jackson, Administrator, Division of Economic Support, Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, August 10, 1989, p. 1.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LOIS M. QUINN

Mr. Chairman and members and staff of the Finance Subcommittee on Social Security and Family Policy, I am Lois Quinn, a Scientist with the Employment and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I am testifying in response to your request to provide information on our evaluation of the Wisconsin Learnfare policy, report on our progress to date, and answer your questions and concerns.

In July of 1989 the Employment and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee entered into contract to evaluate the Learnfare portion of the "Wisconsin Welfare Reform Package Section 1115(a) Waiver Application," approved October, 1987, for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services. A research design for the evaluation was approved in December, 1989, with the final evaluation report due June 30, 1993.¹ The Institute also is evaluating Wisconsin's Work Experience and Job Training (WEJT) Program and the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) for the State of Wisconsin. The work on this evaluation will complement that of Learnfare and allow for analysis of teens who are exempted from the Learnfare schooling requirement or who graduate or age into the workfare programs.

Like the Family Support Act of 1988, Wisconsin's Learnfare policy has as its goal assuring that AFDC family members obtain the skills needed to help them avoid

long-term welfare dependence. The intent of the Learnfare policy was articulated in the Wisconsin waiver request to the Federal Government.

For adults, cooperation with employment and training programs is expected. For teens, school attendance is the appropriate equivalent of adult work and should be treated as seriously as work. The school requirement for all teen members of AFDC households between 13 and 18 years old will permit the state to give the teens a clearly understandable and monetarily tangible reason to pursue their education. Obviously, in and of itself, it may not be sufficient to motivate a teen to continue schooling. However, used in conjunction with a wide range of school and social service programs, it should increase the overall effectiveness of the state's efforts to educate these children. This should reduce the likelihood of their future welfare dependence.²

Learnfare targets not only teen parents receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), but also teenage dependents who reside with a natural or adoptive parent.

The critical outcome for older teens affected by the Learnfare experiment is economic self-sufficiency, which will be measured by data on each individual's subsequent welfare history and labor force experience. The Wisconsin Employee Wage Reporting System will be used for both evaluations. This data base which is already matched against AFDC client populations for welfare fraud purposes provides quarterly earnings of all AFDC participants. The data will be available for all persons living in the state whether they remain on welfare or not. Other expected outcomes include high school completion, improved school performance as measured by credit attainment and grades earned, improved attendance, and reduced incidents of female teen AFDC recipients' childbearing. The school data will be obtained through examination of student records in the Milwaukee Public Schools and five representative school districts in other parts of the state. This data will be supplemented by state records on CED certificates and high school equivalency diplomas issued. Birth records are available statewide through the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to measure subsequent births to participants. The most reliable measures of Learnfare success—transition to employment, post-program AFDC status of teen parents, high school completion, and school credit attainment—will only be meaningful when compared to a similar population for the two-year period before the Learnfare experiment.

What we can present to the Committee today is only preliminary information on certain social service characteristics of teens and families sanctioned under the Learnfare policy in Milwaukee County, the state's largest urban area. The Learnfare evaluation contract required an examination of the characteristics of families sanctioned under Learnfare. Furthermore, the state-appointed Learnfare Advisory Committee in its first meeting asked us to examine the social problems and identified social service needs of chronically sanctioned families in Milwaukee County. With the cooperation of the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Social Services and the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, the Employment and Training Institute examined over four million computerized records from data bases in Milwaukee County including the Children's Court system records since 1979, social service records since at least 1987, all checks written for Milwaukee County social services since 1985, and all records on individuals in the income maintenance system including all Learnfare participants from September, 1988 through December, 1989.

Since Learnfare sanctions impact on the entire family unit, in the critical area of child abuse or neglect we examined these problems for the family unit rather than just the specific teenager whose failure to attend school triggered the family's AFDC benefit reduction. Our first report on *The Impact of Learnfare on Milwaukee County Social Service Clients* summarizes the results of the research utilizing Milwaukee County social service data.³ Briefly stated, the findings include:

- From September, 1988 through December, 1989 the families of 6,612 Milwaukee County teens were sanctioned for failure to meet Learnfare school attendance requirements.
- As state officials anticipated, many teens sanctioned under Learnfare were in families with problems of abuse or neglect. 1,327 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare were in families identified by Milwaukee County social service workers or the Children's Court system as having suspected or documented problems with abuse or neglect. These youth comprised twenty percent of all sanctioned teens in the county.

- When teens who had been in the Children's Court system (either as Children in Need of Protective Services or for delinquent acts) were added to teens living in families coded for possible abuse or neglect, they comprised 2.722 (or forty-one percent) of the 6,612 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned.
- Teens in families coded for possible abuse or neglect or in the Children's Court system received a total of 10,195 monthly sanctions and accounted for \$1,529,250 of the AFDC savings attributed to Learnfare for the September, 1988 through December, 1989 period.
- Another consequence of Learnfare is the sanctioning of AFDC parents who take in foster children and AFDC families contracting with Milwaukee County to provide family day care. While foster children are exempt from Learnfare, the AFDC families who take in foster children are subject to Learnfare requirements for their own teenagers. An analysis of a portion of Milwaukee County families providing foster care found 144 foster children living with AFDC case-heads whose own teens were under the Learnfare policy. Fifty-three of these foster children (36.8 percent of the total) were in families sanctioned under Learnfare. Likewise, AFDC families with teens under the Learnfare requirement were identified who also provide family day care for Milwaukee County. Of the seventy-five children in family day care and placed with AFDC families under the Learnfare requirement, forty-three (57.3 percent) were cared for by families who were sanctioned under Learnfare.

The June 4, 1990 Waiver Authority and Special Conditions requires an examination of the availability of services and the timeliness of providing services to thirteen to nineteen year old sanctioned teens. The new Federal waiver should allow for improved recordkeeping to determine the specific services provided to each of these clients, as well as services provided to an additional 3,300 in-school teens in Milwaukee County sanctioned for poor attendance and 2,356 teens sanctioned in other parts of the state.⁴ Presently, we know that day care for children of teen mothers and transportation monies to and from day care have been provided throughout the state and contracts had been written for alternative education programs in Milwaukee County.

This analysis is critical since the Learnfare policy as presently constituted is dependent for its cost savings upon exemptions from the JOBS legislation which requires identification of supportive service needs and family circumstances prior to sanctioning and a conciliation procedure to resolve disputes related to clients' participation in JOBS programs. It is the position of Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services administrators that social service needs of Learnfare families can be adequately addressed by existing school and county social service staff. The Job Service staff responsible for serving teens sanctioned as dropouts do not presently receive school records or county information on the identified social service needs of sanctioned teens, and the alternative education programs have access to social service records only upon request by the client. While the names of over 3,300 teens sanctioned in Milwaukee County as school dropouts or for failure to report their school status have been given to three case managers employed by Wisconsin Job Service, only alternative school placements are provided and financed. Families of in-school youth requesting social services assistance, other than for day care or transportation to day care, are encouraged by the Milwaukee County Learnfare Hotline and income maintenance unit workers to contact public school social workers.⁵ Tracking services to Learnfare sanctioned families is problematic. School social workers are now expected by state Social Services administrators to provide social services to families of in-school youth sanctioned under Learnfare but do not have access to county and state social service records identifying these families' documented problems. The required recordkeeping of state and federally funded services and referrals will also enable us to track services provided for the subpopulation of 1,327 teens already identified as members of Milwaukee County families with suspected or documented problems of abuse or neglect.

The attached report on *The Impact of Learnfare on Milwaukee County Social Service Clients* identifies additional evaluation issues raised by the social service data from Milwaukee County, and John Pawasarat, Director of the Employment and Training Institute, will describe data currently available on the Learnfare status of AFDC teens.

ENDNOTES

1. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, "Evaluation Research Design for Wisconsin's Learnfare Program," submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, October 15, 1989.

2. Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, "Wisconsin Welfare Reform Package Section 1115(a) Waiver Application," submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 1, 1987, p. 10.

3. John Pawasarat and Lois Quinn, *The Impact of Learnfare on Milwaukee County Social Service Clients* (Milwaukee: Employment and Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, March, 1990).

4. These numbers are for the period from September, 1988 through December, 1989.

5. Interview with Jill Meade, Milwaukee County Learnfare Coordinator, September 28, 1989 See also, DHSS "Important Notice: This Notice May Affect Your AFDC Grant," December 26, 1987; Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, "Important Notice to Teens Currently Being Sanctioned for Learnfare: This Notice May Affect Your Grant," May, 1989.

Attachment.

**THE IMPACT OF LEARNFARE
ON
MILWAUKEE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE CLIENTS**

by

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING INSTITUTE
DIVISION OF OUTREACH & CONTINUING EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE

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COMPUTER PROGRAMMING AND FILE MANAGEMENT by
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH FACILITY

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March, 1990

Introduction

In October, 1987 the Family Support Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services approved the Learnfare portion of the "Wisconsin Welfare Reform Package Section 1115(a) Waiver Application." The Code of Federal Regulations requires evaluations of demonstration projects, and in July, 1989 the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) contracted with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Division of Outreach and Continuing Education Employment and Training Institute (UW-ETI) to conduct the evaluation of the Learnfare portion of the demonstration project. A research design was approved by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in December, 1989. The research design identified six areas for study: the impact of Learnfare on the school attendance of teenage AFDC recipients, the impact of Learnfare on school completion rates, whether Learnfare affects the school performance of teenage AFDC recipients, the impact of Learnfare on the incidents of female teen AFDC recipients' childbearing, a process evaluation of Learnfare implementation, and a study of the impact of Learnfare on families.¹ A final evaluation report is due June 30, 1993.

State and federal officials indicated their particular interest in the impact of sanctions on participants. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services staff also requested that the Employment and Training Institute provide results when they became available to assist other states in implementing the Family Support Act of 1988.² This paper is the first of a series of reports. The paper limits its discussion to the characteristics of teens sanctioned under the Learnfare policy and Learnfare participation rates because reliable data on school achievement and completion rates will only be possible after review of school records which is scheduled during 1991. The data used in the study was available only for Milwaukee County, which accounts for 73.7 percent of all Learnfare sanctions in the state. The researchers cannot determine the ultimate success or failure of the Learnfare policy at this time, but can only offer guideposts for assessing its impact on sanctioned populations.

Executive Summary

This report is part of a larger evaluation which details the experience of all participants in the Milwaukee County Department of Social Services including all Children's Court system records since 1979, Social Service records since at least 1987, all checks written for Milwaukee County Social Services since 1986, and all records on individuals in the income maintenance system including all Learnfare participants from September, 1988 through December, 1989. It is not a sample. Over 4 million records from the data bases cited above were used to describe the experience of families in Milwaukee County's various social service systems.

Findings

1. From September, 1988 through December, 1989 the families of 6,612 Milwaukee County teens were sanctioned for failure to meet Learnfare school attendance requirements.
2. Of the 6,612 teens sanctioned, 28 percent had returned to school and were reported regularly attending two months after their last sanction. For sanctioned teen parents the percentage of teens reported regularly attending school two months after their last sanction was 20 percent. Thirty-five percent of sanctioned teen parents had been exempted from school attendance two months after their last sanction. (See pp. 10-11.)
3. As state officials anticipated, many teens sanctioned under Learnfare were in families with problems of abuse or neglect. (See p. 4.) 1,327 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare were in families identified by Milwaukee County Social Service workers or the Children's Court system as having possible or documented problems with abuse or neglect. These youth comprised 20 percent of all sanctioned teens in the county. (See p. 11.)
4. When teens who have been in the Children's Court system (either as Children in Need of Protective Services, CHIPS, or for delinquency) are added to teens living in families coded for possible abuse or neglect, they comprised 2,722 (or 41 percent) of the 6,612 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned. (See pp. 13-15.)
5. Teens in families coded for possible abuse or neglect or in the Children's Court system received a total of 10,195 monthly sanctions and accounted for \$1,529,250 of the AFDC savings attributed to Learnfare for the September, 1988 through December, 1989 period.
6. The total sanctions for Milwaukee County for the sixteen-month period were 22,379. These sanctions represented an estimated reduction in AFDC payments of \$3,356,850, including a federal savings of \$1,990,950.
7. Another consequence of Learnfare is the sanctioning of AFDC parents who take in foster children and AFDC families contracting with Milwaukee County to provide family day care. While foster children are exempt from Learnfare, the AFDC families who take in foster children are subject to Learnfare requirements for their own teenagers. An analysis of a portion of Milwaukee County families providing foster care found 144 foster children in living with AFDC caseheads whose own teens were under the Learnfare policy. 53 of these foster children (36.8 percent of the total) were in families sanctioned under Learnfare. Likewise, AFDC families with teens under the Learnfare requirement were identified who also provide family day care for Milwaukee County. Of the 75 children in family day placed with AFDC families under the Learnfare requirement, 43 (57.3 percent) were cared for by families who were sanctioned under Learnfare. (See p. 13.)

1. Background on the Wisconsin Learnfare Policy

In July, 1987 the State of Wisconsin enacted legislation implementing a Learnfare policy for families receiving AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). As a condition for receiving aid, all teenagers who have not completed high school must attend school regularly. At the time of a family's six month AFDC review or upon application for AFDC, each teenager's prior school attendance is reviewed by a county Income Maintenance worker or through a computerized match with the Milwaukee Public Schools. Those teens with ten or more unexcused absences for the prior semester or lacking information on their prior semester's attendance are placed on monthly monitoring. Any teens not enrolled in school or having more than two days of unexcused absences under monthly monitoring are removed from their parents' grant ("sanctioned") until they return to school or attend regularly. DHSS reports that a sanction results in an average \$150 a month reduction in the AFDC family grant.³ The Learnfare policy identifies "good cause" reasons why a teenager may be exempt from school attendance, including caring for an infant under three months of age, inability to graduate by age 20, lack of day care, lack of transportation to day care, no school available after expulsion, religious grounds. Funding is provided for day care for the children of Learnfare teen parents and for transportation costs to and from day care.

All teen parents who have not graduated from high school and do not have exemptions are required to meet the Learnfare school attendance policies. Teen dependents are subject to Learnfare requirements only if they reside with at least one natural or adoptive parent. Other teens, living with non-legally responsible relatives such as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent, or an unrelated adult, are exempt from the Learnfare policy and its sanctions.⁴ The Learnfare policy was first applied to teenage parents and dependent teens ages 13-14 in the spring of 1988. Since September, 1988 the Learnfare requirement has effected all teen dependents ages 13-18 residing with their parents and all teen parents ages 13-19 receiving AFDC.

The DHSS Learnfare waiver request to the federal government stated the intent of the policy.

"For adults, cooperation with employment and training programs is expected. For teens, school attendance is the appropriate equivalent of adult work and should be treated as seriously as work. The school requirement for all teen members of AFDC households between 13 and 19 years old will permit the state to give the teens a clearly understandable and monetarily tangible reason to pursue their education. Obviously, in and of itself, it may not be sufficient to motivate a teen to continue schooling. However, used in conjunction with a wide range of school and social service programs, it should increase the overall effectiveness of the state's efforts to educate these children. This should reduce the likelihood of their future welfare dependence."⁵

The waiver request also addressed the issue of requiring school attendance of 18- and 19-year-old teen parents.

"The rationale for requiring all underage teens to remain in school also applies to the young adults who have not achieved high school graduation or its equivalent. The need is, if anything, even greater among young adults who are pregnant or already parents and living on AFDC. School attendance for this group will reduce future dependency. It also reflects the reality that many young people, especially those who have lost school time because of pregnancy and child birth, do not graduate until they are 19 or 20. Requiring teen parents to continue after the eighteenth birthday also puts an emphasis on educational attainment rather than simply attending school."⁶

It is unclear whether the program's creators were willing to accept certain negative consequences of the Learnfare policy. A DHSS staff memo to Secretary Timothy Cullen in November, 1987 discussed the possibility of referring teens to social services prior to any sanctioning. The memo described the issue as:

"Some kids have problems that prevent them from attending school or learning if they are in school, such as drug or alcohol abuse, or emotional problems due to abuse or neglect. These teens are most likely to be sanctioned because parents will be unable to deal with them. They also may be subjected to further abuse or kicked out of the home altogether."⁷

The staff option proposed referring all teens to social services as a first step prior to any sanctions. Those teens with problems preventing regular attendance at school would be exempt from Learnfare sanctions as long as they met the social service plan for dealing with their problems. The advantage of the service was outlined as,

"Helps identify all teens that have problems beyond poor school attendance, and sees that they are offered the treatment they need. If we are concerned about the future of these teens, we will see they get help with all problems that may prevent them from being productive adults."⁸

The memo identified the major disadvantage of this approach as "cost," stating:

"Con Cost. Dollars must be provided to county social service agencies to assess all teens subject to sanction and to deal with those needing help. The cost could be limited somewhat by only using this process for teens that are dropouts. It could be assumed that kids that are enrolled in the school and having problems with drugs, etc., will be identified and dealt with by the school.

Savings. Fewer teens will be sanctioned so the projected 'savings' will be smaller. Will this affect the waiver?"⁹

Rather than creating a system to review family social service needs prior to Learnfare participation, the Learnfare policy instead relies upon existing school social workers, school at-risk programs, and county social service

workers to address problems as they arise. In October, 1988 the Department of Health and Social Services arranged to provide funding for counseling and alternative education programs for high school dropouts sanctioned under Learnfare. Through a contract with Wisconsin Job Service WEOP (Wisconsin Employment Opportunity Program) staff were made available to provide counseling and limited social services to teens sanctioned under Learnfare as dropouts or for failure to report their school status.

In Milwaukee County three WEOP workers are provided lists of names of teens sanctioned as dropouts and for failure to report. Since October, 1988, approximately 3,300 teens have been referred to the WEOP staff in Milwaukee County. The workers contact parents and teens through phone calls and letters and encourage younger teens to return to the public schools. (638 younger teens have been referred to Milwaukee Public Schools.) The workers provide counseling and community service referrals for a number of older teens and contract for classroom training for high school completion or high school equivalency diploma programs for older teens at the Milwaukee Area Technical College and community-based programs. In addition to classroom training, a number of the community-based programs provide social services, including individual and family counseling, instruction in parenting skills, and referrals to community services. From November, 1988 through December, 1989, 625 contracts were provided for classroom training for Learnfare teens under the WEOP program. However, since contracts are generally for a semester period, several contracts may be written for the same teen. DHSS reports that allocations in 1990 for Learnfare programs in Milwaukee County include \$2,735,000 for day care, \$506,700 for transportation to and from day care, \$754,000 for purchase of alternative education, and \$246,000 for staff for the Learnfare Hotline.

DHSS officials continued to be concerned about families with chronic sanctions under Learnfare after the policy's implementation in spring of 1988. At one of the first meetings scheduled with the Employment and Training Institute to discuss the Learnfare evaluation research design, DHSS Division of Policy and Budget staff stressed the importance of looking at chronically sanctioned teens. In May of 1989 an investigation of younger Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare was initiated by the Division of Policy and Budget. Regional DHSS staff solicited the cooperation of the Milwaukee County Department of Social Services to examine the social service records and circumstances of 13- and 14-year-old teens identified by DHSS as sanctioned for at least five months. A recent analysis of the data submitted to DHSS officials in July of 1989 reveals that 22 of the 63 teens studied had Milwaukee County social service codes indicating an investigation for abuse or neglect. These figures are consistent with the findings of this report and are based on several of the same data sources.

It is the position of DHSS administrators that social service needs of Learnfare families can be adequately addressed by existing school and county social service staff. The WEOP staff do not presently receive school records or county information on the identified social service needs of sanctioned teens, and the alternative education programs have access to social service records only upon request by the client. Families of in-school youth requesting social services assistance, other than for day care or

transportation to day care, are encouraged by the Learnfare Hotline and the Income Maintenance Unit workers to contact a public school social worker.¹⁰ The public schools do not presently have access to social service records of Learnfare clients except for those incidents involving the youth at school.

11. Present Status of Milwaukee County Teens on AFDC

As of December, 1989 there were 15,343 teenagers included in AFDC grants in Milwaukee County. This included 2,625 teen parents, 11,672 teen dependents living with a natural or adoptive parent, and 1,046 teens living with an adult other than their parent. The 13,527 teen parents and dependents living with parents who had not graduated from high school were required to meet the Learnfare policy.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY TEENS INCLUDED IN AFDC GRANTS¹¹ December, 1989

<u>Age of Teens</u>	<u>Teen Parents</u>	<u>Dependents Living With Parents</u>	<u>Other Teens</u>
13 years	6	2,684	196
14 "	15	2,586	231
15 "	25	2,324	205
16 "	66	2,117	200
17 "	200	1,701	190
18 "	976	260	24
19 "	1,337	--	--
TOTAL	2,625	11,672	1,046
High School Graduates ¹² (Estimate)	735	35	5
TOTAL Non-Graduates (Estimate)	1,890	11,637	1,041

Computerized data from the state's Computer Reporting Network (CRN) file which is used to determine eligibility for AFDC, food stamps and medical assistance and to record compliance with the Learnfare requirement was analyzed to provide an overview of the DHSS-reported school status of Milwaukee County teens. The school status as of December, 1989 is shown below.

REPORTED SCHOOL STATUS OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY TEEN PARENTS AND DEPENDENTS
(December, 1989)

<u>Status</u>	<u>Teen Parents</u>	<u>Dependents Living with Parents</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
In-school regular student status	193	6,847	7,040	49.2
In-school on monthly monitoring	145	933	1,078	7.6
Unverified, attendance not yet reviewed, not found ¹³	281	2,159	2,440	17.1
Non-graduate exempt from school under Learnfare	907	270	1,177	8.2
High school graduate/G.E.D.	735	35	770	5.4
Sanctioned	364	1,428	1,792	12.5
TOTAL	2,625	11,672	14,297	100.0

III. The Wisconsin Learnfare Model

As other states examine the Learnfare option for portions of the AFDC teen population, the Wisconsin experience can be instructive. The waivers granted by the federal government in October, 1987 permitted Wisconsin to require 13- to 18-year old dependent children and 13- to 19-year-old teen parents to register and participate in school or be subject to sanction. Key to Wisconsin's Learnfare policy was an exemption from assessment activities. Under the JOBS program, states are required to conduct the following activities:

Within a reasonable time period prior to participation the State IV-A agency must make an initial assessment of employability based on:

- (i) The individual's educational, child care, and other supportive services needs;
- (ii) The individual's proficiencies, skills deficiencies, and prior work experience;
- (iii) A review of the family circumstances, which may include the needs of any child of the individual; and
- (iv) Other factors that the State IV-A agency determines relevant in developing the employability plan....¹⁴

However, federal officials point out that the JOBS assessment process does not require a review of existing social service records and may be conducted by income maintenance workers. Such a minimal assessment even if required for Learnfare may not have identified the several thousand teenagers in Milwaukee County AFDC families with documented or suspected problems of abuse or neglect, several hundred youth who had previously run away from home, been in court over changes in guardianship, or had parents petition for court-ordered services for a child they could not control, and another thousand teens with Children's Court events for delinquency or CHIPS.

While state DHSS officials recognized the possible consequences of this policy on victims of abuse or neglect prior to implementation, measures were not instituted to protect these victims apparently due to the costs involved. It is the position of DHSS administrators that social service needs of Learnfare families can be adequately addressed by existing school and county social service staff.

The Wisconsin Learnfare demonstration project officially ends December 31, 1991.¹⁵ In September, 1989 state officials sought waivers from the federal government both to expand the Learnfare policy to dependents ages 6 to 12 and to exempt the state from JOBS legislation requiring assessment of family circumstances and development of an employability plan for teens in the Learnfare population.¹⁶ In December, 1989, the federal government granted the state request to be exempt from JOBS for the current 13- to 19-year-old teen Learnfare population.¹⁷ The waiver request for the 6- to 12-year-olds is still pending.

IV. Methodology

The Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services contracted in April, 1989 with the Employment and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UW-ETI) to provide evaluation services for the Milwaukee County Youth Initiative. This work was incorporated into the evaluation of Wisconsin's Learnfare Policy for the Wisconsin legislature and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which UW-ETI began in July, 1989. As anticipated in the UW-ETI Learnfare evaluation proposal and research design, the combined work provides a comprehensive examination of the identified social service needs of AFDC teens and their families in Milwaukee County.¹⁸ This phase of the research evaluation examined the entire 1989 AFDC teen population and their families in Milwaukee County, utilizing computer data bases for county social services, the Children's Court Center, and the DHSS's Computer Reporting Network.

The Employment and Training Institute's past research both with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and the Department of Public Instruction has demonstrated the limitations of the use of sampling data, particularly for hard-to-serve populations making many entrances and exits into the welfare, social service, court or education systems. In addition, given the focus of the Milwaukee County Youth Initiative on needs of families which can be met by neighborhood-based strategies, the evaluations examined the variety of services or problems encountered by various members of AFDC households affected by the Learnfare policy.

Working with the Milwaukee County Department of Social Services, the UW-ETI with assistance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Social Science Research Facility created one data base from four separate computer systems within the county: the JUSTIS file providing data on all persons in the Children's Court system since 1979, SIMPLE and its predecessor SSIS which provide a history of social services recorded in Milwaukee County since at least January of 1987, and the county UPS file detailing checks written since January, 1986. Each computer system retains historical data since at least 1987, and in some cases as far back as 1979. For over 10,000 records, cases were visually inspected to match client data which did not have common identifiers, had name changes or variations in spelling, or had miscoded data fields. UW-ETI also worked for several months developing a file format for the state's Computer Reporting Network (CRN) active database system which has recorded information on all AFDC, food stamp, and medical assistance clients and applicants since 1980. In late December, 1989 UW-ETI received state DHSS computer files on Learnfare sanctions which were subsequently matched with the county data.

The following cautions should be noted regarding the county social service and court data. Data from Milwaukee County's computer system regarding social services to families and individuals (the SIMPLE system and its predecessor SSIS) accurately reports only those cases entered into the computer. In some instances clients may not have been entered, thereby undercounting the services (e.g. investigations or ongoing services for child abuse or neglect) provided. Extensive examination of the Children's Court data reveals an extremely low error rate. However, delays as long as six months in entering information result in missing data for 1989 dispositions. While numerous errors were observed in the coded CRN data on Learnfare-eligible teens, the sanction data should be accurate.¹⁹ The data on sanctioned families in this report has not been revised, however, to reflect cases where full AFDC payments were restored as a result of appeals or fair hearing decisions.

V. Teens Sanctioned Under Learnfare in Milwaukee County

From September, 1988 through December, 1989, the families of 8,968 Wisconsin teens receiving AFDC were sanctioned for failure to meet the Learnfare requirement. 6,612 of these sanctions (73.7 percent of the total) occurred in Milwaukee County.

AFDC TEENS SANCTIONED ONE OR MORE MONTHS September, 1988 through December, 1989

	<u>Milwaukee County</u>	<u>Balance of State</u>	<u>Total</u>
Teen Parents	1,562	872	2,434
Dependents	5,050	1,484	6,534
TOTAL	6,612	2,356	8,968

A longitudinal file was created from monthly DHSS computer tapes to follow the reported progress of teens sanctioned under Learnfare. Of the 6,612 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned during the period from September, 1988 through December, 1989, 28 percent had returned to school and were reported regularly attending two months after their last sanction. This group included 317 teen parents (20 percent of all sanctioned teen parents) and 1,530 dependent teens (30 percent of all sanctioned teen dependents).

REPORTED SCHOOL STATUS OF TEEN PARENTS TWO MONTHS AFTER THEIR LAST SANCTION (as of December, 1989)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
In-school	317	20.3
Still sanctioned ²⁰	366	23.4
Unverified or not found	92	5.9
Exempt from school	549	35.2
No longer on AFDC	238	15.2
TOTAL	1,562	100.0

Thirty percent of Milwaukee County dependent teens sanctioned under Learnfare had returned to school with regular attendance two months after their last sanction. An additional 2.7 percent of the teens may be in school, but their attendance is unverified for that month.

REPORTED SCHOOL STATUS OF TEEN DEPENDENTS TWO MONTHS
AFTER THEIR LAST SANCTION (as of December, 1989)

	Number	Percent of Total
In-school	1,530	30.3
Still sanctioned ²¹	1,428	28.3
Unverified or not found	256	5.1
Exempt from school ²²	116	2.2
Moved to AFDC case headed by a non-parent	29	0.6
No longer on AFDC	1,691	33.5
TOTAL	5,050	100.0

VI. AFDC Families Coded for Possible Problems with Child Abuse or Neglect

Using both the Social Service system computer files (SIMPLE and SSIS) and the JUSTIS file, a "flag" was created for those families who had an indication of possible abuse or neglect. This included families with any children who had an event in Children's Court under the statutes for abuse or neglect, families investigated or provided ongoing services through Protective Services, and families for whom a social worker indicated a possible problem in this area. It is important to note that these families have not necessarily had a court action or a proven instance of abuse or neglect (although some have), but that at a minimum a case worker has investigated one or more members of the family for abuse or neglect or has indicated this as a possible problem in the casehead's social service file. In some families, the person who abused the child may no longer be in the household or the abused child may have been removed to foster care or a group home.

2,284 teens were identified whose families had a code indicating possible abuse or neglect and who were required to attend school under the Learnfare policy.

- Nearly 60 percent of these teens (1,327 youth) have been sanctioned for one or more months under Learnfare.
- Another 957 teens (42 percent of teens identified in families flagged with abuse or neglect codes) who were in families with an abuse or neglect code had their school attendance reviewed for at least one month during the sixteen month period and had no sanctions.
- The 1,327 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned under Learnfare between September, 1988 and December, 1989, and in families with an abuse or neglect family code made up 20 percent of all sanctioned teens for the 16-month period.
- One-fourth (24 percent) of Milwaukee County teens sanctioned for ten or more months were in families with an abuse or neglect code.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY SANCTIONED TEENS
 (September, 1988 through December, 1989)

<u>Teens with Identified Needs</u>	TOTAL MONTHS TEEN WAS SANCTIONED													<u>Total</u>
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13-15</u>	
In families with abuse/neglect codes	356	259	191	140	89	59	54	50	46	27	24	13	19	1,327
In Children's Court system as individuals	493	418	262	210	139	111	80	71	67	48	40	20	31	1,990
TOTAL (excluding overlap)	702	568	367	287	190	140	106	101	87	58	51	25	40	2,722
ALL TEENS SANCTIONED	2034	1455	860	626	410	292	236	198	157	120	100	54	70	6,612
Teens with Identified Needs as a percent of all sanctions	34%	39%	43%	46%	46%	48%	45%	51%	55%	48%	51%	46%	57%	41%

VII. Foster Parents and Child Care Providers on AFDC

Many Milwaukee County AFDC recipients whose own children are under the Learnfare requirement also care for foster children or are family day care providers. As a result, these families may be sanctioned under Learnfare. An analysis of a portion of the foster care population found 144 foster children living in families where a teenager was subject to Learnfare. 53 of these foster children (36.8 percent of the total) were in families where a Learnfare sanction occurred. Likewise, 75 children were identified receiving family day care from a family whose teens were subject to Learnfare. 43 of these children (57.3 percent of the total) were in families who were sanctioned.

The Milwaukee County Department of Social Services maintains a check writing file (UPS) which details all expenses paid for by Milwaukee County for social services. Checks written during the period from September, 1988 to June, 1989 for foster home and family day care were matched against the Learnfare longitudinal file in September, 1988 through December, 1989 and the July 1989 CRN file to establish whether or not the child was living out of the home and to identify foster parents. This is not a complete count of the foster care population on AFDC.

This analysis limits itself to the population identified as foster parents or day care providers and the extent to which sons or daughters of these families were sanctioned under Learnfare. Subsequent analysis will examine whether there was an increase in the number of dependent children being placed in foster care or living with non-legally related relatives. This preliminary analysis suggests only that social service providers are also required to participate under Learnfare and are at some time sanctioned under Learnfare.

VIII. AFDC Teens in the Children's Court System

Milwaukee County's JUSTIS file was used to provide information on children involved in Children's Court both under CHIPS (children in need of protective services) and for delinquency. The JUSTIS file provides data on all persons at Children's Court since 1979.

The Children's Court charges of 1,990 youth sanctioned under Learnfare were reviewed. Note: the term "charges" is used for many events in which the child is a victim, e.g. for abuse or neglect, or where guardianship may be transferred to a non-parent as well as for cases of delinquency. The charges of the first event in Children's Court for the 1,990 teens sanctioned included,

- 909 youth - Statutes 943.01 to 943.125 (See the Appendix for a list of charges)
- 295 youth - Statutes 940.01 to 940.44
- 170 youth - Statutes 941.01 to 941.30

- 146 youth - Statutes 48.13(10) neglect, 48.13(3) abuse, 48.13(2) abandonment
- 144 youth - Statutes 947.01 to 947.15
- 76 youth - Statute 48.13(4), parent unable to provide care (uncontrollable)
- 55 youth - Statutes 341.04 through 347.06
- 49 youth - Statutes 161.41 to 167.10, including possession or delivery of controlled substance
- 40 youth - Statute 48.13(7a), runaway
- 23 youth - Statutes 48.13(8) and 48.13(2), parent unavailable or without parent
- 19 youth - Statute 880.07 and 880.15, guardianship or appointment of temporary guardian
- 11 youth - Statutes 944.01 to 944.33, sexual offenses
- 10 youth - Statutes 48.13(6) and 48.13(7), truancy
- 10 youth - Statutes 946.41(1) to 946.80

238 of these first charges (12 percent of the total) occurred in 1989, and 403 charges (20 percent of the total) in 1988.

A number of teens with Children's Court system charge events (CHIPS or delinquent) were reported as attending school regularly under the Learnfare policy. 1,727 AFDC teens with Children's Court charges were identified whose school attendance was reviewed for the semester or monitored monthly and who had no sanctions during any months on aid between September, 1988 through December, 1989. The charges of the first event in Children's Court for these 1,727 teens include,

- 678 youth - Statutes 943.01 to 943.125 (See the Appendix for a list of charges)
- 367 youth - Statutes 940.01 to 940.44
- 104 youth - Statutes 947.01 to 947.15
- 89 youth - Statutes 941.01 to 941.30
- 75 youth - Statute 48.13(4), parent unable to provide care (uncontrollable)

- 49 youth - Statute 880.07 and 880.15, guardianship or appointment of temporary guardian
- 45 youth - Statutes 341.04 through 347.06
- 29 youth - Statutes 161.41 to 167.10, including possession or delivery of controlled substance
- 14 youth - Statutes 48.13(8) and 48.13(2), parent unavailable or without parent
- 10 youth - Statute 48.13(7a), runaway

When the teens from the Children's Court system are combined with those teens identified from families with possible problems of abuse or neglect, there is considerable overlap. Taken together, the following can be said of their Learnfare experience.

- 2,722 of the 6,612 Milwaukee County teens sanctioned between September, 1989 and December, 1989, were in families with an abuse or neglect code or had an event in the Children's Court system, or both. These teens made up 41 percent of all sanctioned teens.
- 344 teens were sanctioned for at least ten of the last sixteen months of Learnfare (September, 1988 through December, 1989). Half of this group (174 teens) have been identified as living in families with an abuse or neglect code, having an event in Children's Court for CHIPS or delinquency, or both.
- 45 percent of the AFDC cost savings resulting from monthly sanctions in Milwaukee County during the sixteen month period can be attributed to sanctions for teens in families with an abuse or neglect code or with events in the Children's Court system. These teens and their families accounted for \$1,529,250 of the reduced AFDC benefits due to Learnfare sanctions in Milwaukee County.

IX. Federal Legislation Targeting AFDC Participants and Their Families

The federal government policies toward social services mandated for welfare clients involved in employment and training programs have shifted during the last decade. Under the Work Incentive Program (WIN), originally established as part of the 1967 Social Security Amendments, states were required to provide assessment, counseling, supportive services and an employability development plan which considered the particular needs of the client. The governmental cooperation mandated under WIN required the state DHSS to operate an administrative unit separate from the income maintenance unit whose employees were to specialize in the provision of services including "health, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, child care, and other social and supportive services as are necessary to enable such individuals to accept

employment..."²³ Secondly, this unit in cooperation with the WIN sponsor (Job Service) was responsible for developing an employability development plan containing a "manpower services plan and a supportive services plan."²⁴ Furthermore the unit was required to "certify in writing that the necessary immediate and ongoing supportive services have been provided or arranged, or that no such services are required for those individuals who have been selected for participation in a WIN component."²⁵

WIN-DEMO

Many states complained that the WIN structure was inefficient and resulted in parallel bureaucracies in DHSS and Job Service. WIN-Demo, authorized under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, allowed states to "streamline" WIN by transferring all activities to one administrative unit, and additionally allowed states to abandon all assessment, employability plans, and supportive services. Wisconsin adopted their WIN-Demo project in this fashion under the Wisconsin Employment Opportunities Program (WEOP). All applicants were registered in WEOP as a condition for eligibility for AFDC, and all mandatory and voluntary participants immediately entered into Job Search. Wisconsin's WEOP Plan provided that, "Appraisal of recipients' job history, job skills, education and training needs and general employability will only be done if the recipient is still unemployed after the initial Job Search period."

JOBS

The Family Support Act of 1988 through its Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program returns to the original WIN model and in many respects expands upon the requirements set forth in the original WIN program. Emphasis is once again placed on the importance of assessing the clients' needs and family circumstances in the development of individual employability development plans. Target groups are identified and special consideration is given the needs of teen parents. The JOBS regulations include the following:

- Emphasis on identifying a long-range employment goal even for students required to complete school.
- Identification of supportive services needs and family circumstances which may include the needs of any child of the individual.
- Development of an employability plan which takes into account the individual's supportive service needs and local employment opportunities.
- Optional contracts with participants specifying client obligations and social services to be provided.
- A conciliation procedure to resolve disputes related to clients' participation in JOBS programs.

In the 1987 application for welfare reform waivers, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services was very clear about the need for supportive services for teen parents.²⁶ The Learnfare waivers did not, however, anticipate building in a social service component for assessment or services, but requested exemptions from responsibility from this portion of the Social Security Act. The waiver application makes clear the importance of these exemptions by restating its request to waive WIN requirements for assessment, counseling and supportive services.²⁷

The implementation of the Wisconsin Learnfare model would likely not have been possible without an exemption from assessment, counseling, supportive services and an employability plan. The sheer numbers of AFDC dependent teens along with teen parents in the state (30,000 plus) may have made the task fiscally prohibitive. With WIN and JOBS requirements waived, the process became an inexpensive policy with limited administrative costs. Accordingly, the Learnfare process in Milwaukee County was abbreviated to the following:

- 1) The Income Maintenance Unit (IMU) requires families to report school attendance information as a condition of AFDC eligibility.
- 2) An IMU worker decides any exemptions.
- 3) A computer matches school records against IMU data.
- 4) Sanctioning occurs automatically after the computer match.
- 5) Families of in-school youth requesting social services are referred by the Learnfare Hotline to the public school social worker.
- 6) The names of teens who are sanctioned as dropouts or for failure to report information are provided to three WEOP workers who attempt to make contact with these families and provide services including contracting for alternative education programs.

Future research will examine programs instituted by the schools to serve Learnfare teens who have been sanctioned, are under monthly monitoring for their attendance, or who return as dropouts. In addition, the data in this report will be expended in future studies along with the issues it raises, including:

- Exploration of the consequences of sanctioning teens from families with multiple problems.
- An examination of services, both educational and supportive, provided by WEOP-funded alternative education programs for 18- and 19-year-old teens.
- An in-depth analysis of the teen parent population and the reasons for the large number of exemptions to school attendance for this group.

- An analysis of the Income Maintenance Unit (IMU) workers' expanded responsibilities under Learnfare and WEJT/CWEP, their preparation and training, and the method of establishing program participation status.
- An analysis of the expanded role for the school social worker and the adequacies of funding and training to absorb Learnfare responsibilities.
- A survey of school officials to assess impact of Learnfare on school programs.

Endnotes

1. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, "Evaluation Research Design for Wisconsin's Learnfare Program," submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, October 15, 1989.
2. Meeting with Nancye Campbell and Lois James, Family Support Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, October 2, 1989.
3. Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, "Final Fourth Quarter Statement, Quarterly Statement of Welfare Reform Waivers' Costs and Savings," September 30, 1989.
4. Governor Tommy G. Thompson line-itemed vetoed Wisconsin Act 27 of the 1987 legislature enacting Learnfare to expand its coverage from teenage parents to all teenage youth-receiving AFDC. DHSS administrative rules narrowed the target population among non-parents to those teen dependents who reside with one of their natural or adoptive parents.
5. Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, "Wisconsin Welfare Reform Package Section 1115(a) Waiver Application," submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, May 1, 1987, p. 10.
6. Ibid., p. 14.
7. Memo from DHSS staff member Diane Waller to DHSS Secretary Timothy Cullen re "Learnfare", November 24, 1987, p. 1.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Interview with Jill Meade, Milwaukee County Learnfare Coordinator, September 28, 1989. See also, DHSS "Important Notice: This Notice May Affect Your AFDC Grant," December 26, 1987; Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, "Important Notice to Teens Currently Being Sanctioned for Learnfare: This Notice May Affect Your Grant," May, 1989.
11. These numbers differ from the DHSS monthly reports on "Learnfare-Covered Teen AFDC Recipients." Eighteen-year-old teen dependents who are sanctioned as dropouts are considered ineligible for AFDC and not included in this analysis. All 19-year-old teen parents (even those within two months of their 20th birthday) are included.
12. Eighteen year olds who have completed high school are not eligible for AFDC as dependents.
13. This group includes 274 teens with Learnfare school codes of "not found," 824 teens whose attendance was not verified for that month, 1,106 thirteen-year-olds whose attendance has not yet been reviewed, and 236 fourteen- to nineteen-year-olds miscoded as "children under age 13."

14. Paragraph 250.41 of Chapter 11, Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations as amended October 13, 1989.
15. Letter from Wayne A. Stanton, Administrator, Family Support Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to Patricia Goodrich, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, December 2, 1988.
16. "Wisconsin Learnfare Waiver," submitted by Governor Tommy G. Thompson to Louis Sullivan, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, September 12, 1989, pp. 14-15.
17. Letter from Eunice S. Thomas, Acting Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to Patricia Goodrich, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, received December 29, 1989.
18. Employment and Training Institute, "A Proposal to Evaluate Learnfare," submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services on November 1, 1988; UW-ETI, "Evaluation Research Design for Wisconsin's Learnfare Program," submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services on October 15, 1989.
19. 13 percent of the 29,269 teen parents and dependents under the Learnfare requirement in the state in July, 1989 had missing or inconsistent entries for Learnfare status or highest grade completed.
20. This total includes 54 teen parents sanctioned only in December, 145 parents sanctioned for 2-4 months, 116 parents sanctioned for 5-9 months, and 51 teen parents sanctioned for 10-15 months. Eighteen-year-old teens who are sanctioned as dropouts are not included since 18-year-olds are only eligible as AFDC dependents if they are in school.
21. This total includes 171 teens only sanctioned in December, 639 teens sanctioned for 2-4 months, 422 teens sanctioned for 5-9 months, and 196 teens who have been sanctioned for 10-15 months.
22. This group includes only 13-17 year old dependents since 18-year-old dependents are eligible for AFDC only if they are attending school.
23. Social Security Act, 402(a)(19)(G).
24. 45 CFR 224.22(d).
25. 45 CFR 224.22(e).
26. Wisconsin DHSS, "Wisconsin Welfare Reform Package Section 1115(a) Waiver Application," May 1, 1987, p. 10.
27. Ibid., pp. 10, 31, 32.

CHILDREN'S COURT CHARGE LIST

2.138 Hindering
 48.13(1) Without a Parent
 48.13(2) Abandonment
 48.13(3) Abuse
 48.13(4) Parent Unable to Provide Care (Uncontrollable)
 48.13(5) Illegal Placement
 48.13(6) School Truancy
 48.13(7) Home Truancy
 48.13(7a) Runaway
 48.13(8) Parent is Unavailable
 48.13(9) Child Over 12 Needs Special Care
 48.13(10) Neglect
 48.13(11) Emotional Damage
 48.13(12) Child Under 12 Delinquent
 48.13(13) Not Immunized Per Required Statute
 48.36 Motion to Compel Support
 48.355(6) Motion for Imposition of Sanction
 48.41(1) TPR-Voluntary
 48.415(1) TPR-Abandonment
 48.415(2) TPR-Cont. Need Prtn. & Srv.
 48.415(3) TPR-Cont. Par. Disability
 48.415(4) TPR-Cont. Denial of Visitation
 48.415(5) TPR-Repeated Abuse
 48.415(6) TPR- Fail to Assn. Par Resp.
 48.423 Adjudication of Paternity
 48.43(5)(A) Permanency Plan Review
 48.64(4c) Foster Home License Appeal
 48.205(1a) P/C-Injury to Child or Others
 48.205(1b) P/C-No Care for Child
 48.205(1c) P/C-Runaway
 48.207(1)(d) Violation of Non-Secure Court Order
 51.20(1) Involuntary Commitment (attempted Suicide)
 51.45(13) Commitment for Alcoholism
 55.06(2) Developmentally Disabled
 66.054(19) Loitering by Minor on Class B Premises
 66.054(22) Misrepresentation of Age by Minor to Obtain
 Alcoholic Beverage
 66.054(200) Possession by Minor of Alcoholic Beverage
 105.20 Assault & Battery
 105.69 Paint Sniffing
 105.70 Toxic Glue Sniffing
 106.23 Loitering-Curfew
 106.31 Loitering-Prowling
 106.31(1) Loitering-Prostitution Related
 115.81 Special Education Appeal
 125.07(4)(2) Underage Drinking
 161.41(1) Deliver Controlled Substance
 161.41(1a) Possession of Controlled Substance with Intent to Deliver
 161.41(3) Possession of Controlled Substance
 161.465 Distribution of Controlled Substance to Prisoners
 164.20(P) Possession of Tear Gas Weapon
 167.10 Possession of Fireworks
 192.32 Railroad Trespass
 341.04 Operation Unreg. or Improperly Reg. Vehicle
 343.05 Driving Without Operator's License
 343.05(C) Driving Motor-Driven Cycle W/O Operator's License
 343.07 Violations of Instruction Permit
 343.14(5) Falsifying License or ID Card

Appendix 21

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343.43(1) Unlawful Use of License
 343.44 Driving While License Revoked or Suspended
 346.04(1) Failure to Obey Traffic Officers
 346.04(2) Disregarding Official Sign
 346.04(3) Fleeing
 346.04(3A) Eluding
 346.13(3) Wrong way on One-Way Street
 346.57(2) Speed not Reasonable or Prudent
 346.57(3) Failure to Control Vehicle
 346.57(5) Speed Exceeds Zoned Posted Limits
 346.62(1) Reckless Driving
 346.63(1) Operating Under Influence of Controlled Substance
 346.63(1)(A) Operating Under Influence of Intoxicant
 346.67(B) Duty Upon Striking Occupied Vehicle - Personal Injury
 346.68 Duty Upon Striking Unoccupied Vehicle
 346.69 Hit and Run of Property On/Adj. Highway
 346.87 Unsafe Backing
 346.89(1) Inattentive Driving
 346.92(1) Illegal Riding On Vehicle
 346.93 Poss. of Liq/Beer in Auto With Minor
 347.06(1) Driving Without Headlamps
 880.07 Guardianship
 880.15 Appointment of Temporary Guardian
 939.05 Party to a Crime (Must include another charge)
 939.31 Conspiracy to Commit Crime
 939.32 Attempted (Must include another charge)
 939.63 While Armed
 940.01 First Degree Murder
 940.02 Second Degree Murder
 940.03 Third Degree Murder
 940.05 Manslaughter
 940.06 Homicide by Reckless Conduct
 940.08(W) Homicide by Negligent Use of Weapon
 940.09 Homicide by Intoxicated User of Vehicle
 940.19 Battery
 940.19(2) Aggravated Battery
 940.20(2) Battery to Police Officers or Firefighters
 940.20(3) Battery to Witnesses or Jurors
 940.21 Mayhem
 940.225(1) First Degree Sexual Assault
 940.225(2) Second Degree Sexual Assault
 940.225(3) Third Degree Sexual Assault
 940.225(3M) Fourth Degree Sexual Assault
 940.23 Injury by Conduct Regardless of Life
 940.24 Injury by Negligent Use of Weapon
 940.30 False Imprisonment
 940.32 Abduction
 940.43 Intimidation of Witnesses
 940.44 Intimidation of Victim
 941.01 Negligent Operation of Vehicle
 941.10 Negligent Handling of Burning Materials
 941.13 False Alarms
 941.20 Reckless Use of Weapon
 941.22 Possession of Pistol by Minor
 941.23 Carrying Concealed Weapon
 941.24 Possession of Switchblade Knife
 941.26 Machine Gun & Other Weapons Use
 941.28(2) Possession of Saved-Off Shotgun
 941.30 Endangering Safety by Conduct Req. of Life
 943.01 Criminal Damage to Property

943.02 Arson of Buildings
 943.02(A) Arson
 943.06 Possession of Molotov Cocktails
 943.07(3) Criminal Damage to Railroads
 943.10 Burglary
 943.10(A) Burglary (Armed)
 943.11 Entry Into Locked Vehicle
 943.12 Possession of Burglariou Tools
 943.13 Trespass to Land
 943.14 Criminal Trespass to Dwelling
 943.14(A) Criminal Trespass
 943.15 Entry Into Locked Building
 943.20 Theft
 943.20(A) Auto Theft
 943.20(1) Theft from Auto
 943.20(P) Theft from Person
 943.21 Fraud on Hotel Keeper
 943.23 Operationg Motor Vehicle W/O Owner's Consent
 943.24 Issue of Worthless Checks
 943.30 Threats to Injure
 943.30(2) Extortion
 943.32 Robbery (Includes Strongarm)
 943.32(A) Robbery (Armed)
 943.32(B) Robbery (Armed & Masked)
 943.32(D) Robbery (Masked)
 943.34 Receiving Stolen Property
 943.34(C) Concealing Stolen Property
 943.34(P) Possession of Stolen Property
 943.38 Forgery
 943.38(A) Forgery-Uttering
 943.41(5) Fraudulent Use of Credit Card
 943.45 Obtaining Telecommunications Service by Fraud
 943.50 Shoplifting
 943.125 Entry Into Locked Coin Box
 944.01 Rape
 944.02 Sexual Intercourse Without Consent
 944.11 Indecent Behavior with a Child
 944.15 Fornication
 944.17 Sexual Perversion
 944.20 Lewd & Lascivious Behavior
 944.30 Prostitution
 944.33 Pandering
 945.02 Gambling
 946.41(1) Resisting/Obstructing Officer
 946.41 Resisting Officer
 946.41(A) Obstructing Officer
 946.42 Escape
 946.44 Assisting or Permitting Escape
 946.62 Concealing Identity
 946.71 Interfering with Custody of a Child
 946.715 Concealment
 946.80 Misconduct on Public Grounds
 947.01 Disorderly Conduct
 947.01(2) Unlawful Use of Telephone
 947.01(5) Bomb Scares
 947.15 Contributing to Delinquency of Child
 948.02 Cruelty to Animals
 948.03 Dognapping
 999.80 Petition for Revision of Dispositional Order
 999.80(p) Petition for Change of Placement
 999.81 Petition for Extension of Dispositional Order
 999.82(d) Motion to Dismiss Petition
 999.85 Supervision Requested - Other Court
 999.86 Disp/Supv Requested - Other Court
 999.82(v) Motion to Vacate Order
 943.70(2) Computer Crime Against Data or Program
 943.70(3) Computer Crime Against Equipment or Supplies

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK M. ROGACKI

BACKGROUND ON THE WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

The Wisconsin Counties Association was created by Wisconsin Statute in 1935 to protect county interests and further better county government. WCA is a voluntary organization of county governments representing over 1900 county board supervisors and executives. Currently, 69 of Wisconsin's 72 counties are members of the Association. The Wisconsin Counties Association is governed by a 15 member board of directors who represent some of Wisconsin's largest (Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha) and smallest (Ashland, Forest, Jackson, and Price) counties.

The role of the Wisconsin Counties Association is to provide a county voice on both state and Federal issues of concern to county government. In Wisconsin, we have six licensed lobbyists. In Washington, we are represented by Waterman and Associates.

WISCONSIN'S COUNTY BASED WELFARE SYSTEM

In Wisconsin, county government is responsible for administering the Federal income maintenance programs, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Wisconsin county officials have witnessed the transformation of the "temporary" welfare programs that were created during the New Deal into "permanent" welfare programs. AFDC is one such program.

During its 55 year history, we have watched families turn to AFDC for short-term support, seen that support turn to dependence and are now faced with the economic and societal problems caused by that welfare dependency.

We know that single-parent households primarily headed by women, rely on public assistance for support and that the public assistance programs often provide economic disincentives to self-sufficiency.

We have experienced more and more third, fourth and even fifth generation AFDC families.

We have a tremendous problem with teen pregnancy which often results in high school dropouts and AFDC dependency.

It appears that we have established a welfare system which teaches our children, by example, that relying on public assistance is an acceptable career. We have shown our children that an education is not necessary. We have established a public support system that encourages dependency and discourages self-sufficiency. And it appears we are teaching our children to be welfare dependant better than we are teaching our children the tools to improve their skills and marketability.

Since we administer the welfare programs, Wisconsin county officials have long realized that there are problems. We know that Wisconsin's welfare programs fail to assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient. When we see generation after generation of the same family living on AFDC, we know we have failed.

Further, in the early 1980s, our problems were compounded by the high level of benefits in our state. At one time, we provided the third highest AFDC benefits in the nation. With our benefits higher than our neighboring states, we experienced an influx of welfare dependents from those states, especially from Illinois. So not only were we dealing with welfare problems among Wisconsinites, we were inheriting welfare problems from other states.

WELFARE REFORM

During the mid-1980s, Wisconsin debated welfare reform, benefit levels, disincentives to work, extended medical coverage for welfare recipients who get jobs, mandatory work programs and mandatory school programs. With the election of Tommy G. Thompson as Governor in 1986, Wisconsin began to address these issues.

We received waivers from the Federal Government that allowed Wisconsin to implement education and training programs for adults and Learnfare programs for teenagers. It is our belief that these programs are integral in any effort to break the welfare dependency. We are working toward a welfare program that meets the original goals of the Social Security Act of 1935, a program that provides temporary assistance to the needy and helps them help themselves.

Wisconsin's welfare program, under the leadership of Governor Thompson, creates the assumption that each individual is responsible for achieving self-sufficiency. The AFDC benefit level was reduced to stem the influx of welfare recipients from other states and the savings were used to finance the new education and training initiatives in Wisconsin's welfare program. We now have a program that not only provides for the welfare recipient's daily needs, but also provides them with the

skills necessary to become self-sufficient. It is a program that invests in our children and our future.

LEARNFARE

One major component of Wisconsin's welfare reform program is Learnfare. County officials long discussed the problem of high school dropouts and the increasing number schoolage welfare recipients. We knew that these children did not receive the necessary skills to become contributing members of society. We knew that we would have to find a way to keep all of our children in school if we had any hope of breaking the cycle of welfare dependency.

The primary objective of the Learnfare program is to help teenagers receive their high school diplomas by requiring school attendance as a condition of receiving AFDC benefits. With a high school diploma, the teenagers will have access to better jobs, and those jobs will reduce the demand for expanded welfare programs. Learnfare is also designed to increase parental involvement in their children's education and contact between the parents and the school.

Counties have also used this program to identify children and families in need of services. In Milwaukee, Rock and Racine counties, a county employee works with the Learnfare teens to identify any social problems that may contribute to the teen's failure to attend school. These county employees determine whether the Learnfare teen needs alternative education, day care or transportation services and helps locate these services. In addition, these county employees visit the homes and use these visits to identify other family members in need of services. Counties have used this information to develop special programs designed to meet the needs identified.

Racine County, for example, has implemented an intensive juvenile counseling program. This program, designed for adjudicated youths, includes intensive counseling and monitoring coordinated between the courts and probation department.

Through Learnfare, the state also provides funds for transportation and child care to provide teen mothers and other Learnfare participants a greater opportunity to attend school and receive their diplomas. We believe that Learnfare and the education of all of our children is an important component in reducing poverty.

NEW LEARNFARE INITIATIVES

Governor Thompson has recently proposed to expand the Learnfare program. While the current Learnfare program requires schoolage teens to attend school, the expanded program would include children between the ages of six and twelve. We have found that our children's habits are developed well before the teenage years. It is our hope that pre-teen Learnfare will result in better habits, including study skills and school attendance habits.

Recently the Federal Government has announced its approval of the waivers necessary to expand Learnfare. The expanded Learnfare program will be considered by the Wisconsin Legislature in early 1992.

CONCLUSION

In an article published in the *NYSAC News* (New York Association of Counties). In 1987, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan correctly pointed out that the welfare system had failed our children. "They are," he wrote, "given short weight, and it will show—as a group, though some will be lucky—throughout their lives, in school, after school, at work, at raising families of their own. To know this and not to do something about it is to say we don't care about it."

